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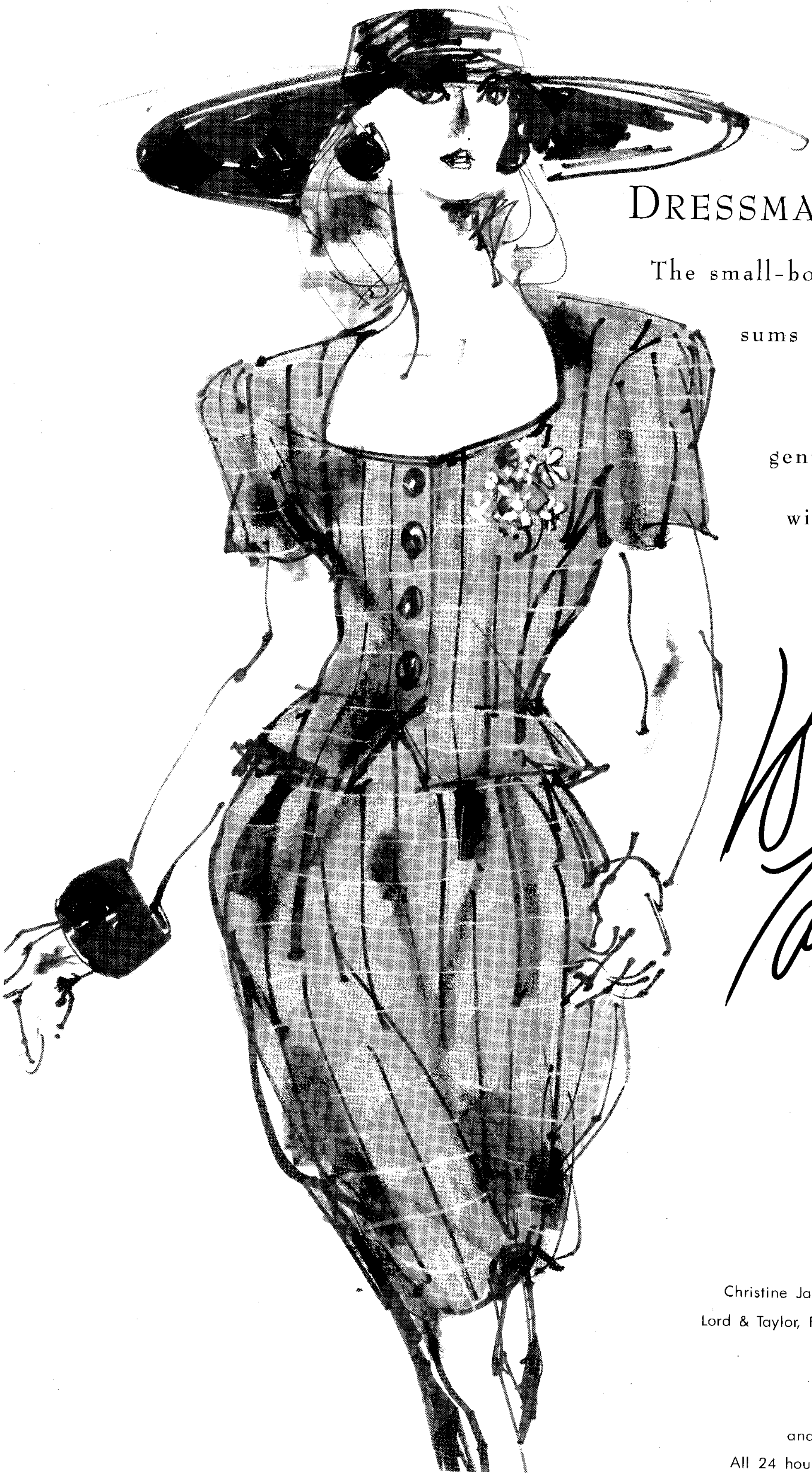

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

A CONSCIENTIOUS CALENDAR OF EVENTS OF INTEREST

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S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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THE THEATRE

PLAYS AND MUSICALS

After Crystal Night—A play by John Herman Shaner. (Henry Street Settlement, 466 Grand St. 598-0400. Thursdays through Sundays at 7:30. Matinées Saturdays and Sundays at 3.)

American Notes—A play by Len Jenkin. Previews Tuesday and Wednesday, Feb. 16-17. Opens officially on Thursday, Feb. 18, at 7. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150. Nightly, except Mondays, at 8. Matinées Saturdays and Sundays at 3.)

Anything Goes—*Under the clever direction of* Jerry Zaks, this exuberant revival is primarily a celebration of Cole Porter himself. The libretto, as revised from the original by Timothy Crouse and John Weidman, is consistently entertaining. The company, which includes Bill McCutcheon, Howard McGillin, *Patti LuPone, Anthony Heald, and Kathleen* Mahony-Bennett, does more than justice to the words and score. (Reviewed in our issue of 11/2/87.) (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

The Boys Next Door—The "boys" are three retarded men and a schizophrenic who, under professional supervision, share an apartment. Tom Griffin's good play, though inevitably touching, is also often very funny, and never sentimental. It is acted to near-perfection by a first-rate company, which includes Christine Estabrook, Josh Mostel, Joe Grifasi, William Jay, Dennis Boutsikaris, and John Wylie. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Lambs, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780. Mondays and Wednesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

Breaking the Code—Derek Jacobi is accomplished and fascinating as the English mathematician Alan Turing, who helped crack the German Enigma code during the war, but Hugh Whitemore's script is more vehicle than play. Michael Gough, Rachel Gurney, and Jenny Agutter are among the good supporting actors. Clifford Williams was the director. (11/30/87) (Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 246-0102. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

Burn This—Lanford Wilson's play can be considered an occasion for an astonishing performance by John Malkovich, as a foulmouthed restaurant manager who woos and wins his dead brother's dancing partner. The supporting actors—Joan Allen, Jonathan Hogan, and Lou Liberatore—are also good. Marshall W. Mason was the director, and the distinguished setting was designed by John Lee Beatty and lighted by Dennis Parichy. (10/26/87) (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.)

Cabaret—This tasteful revival of the 1966 musical by John Kander and Fred Ebb (directed by Harold Prince) has a gloriously muted Joel Grey re-creating his role as the Emcee and a sterling performance by Alyson Reed, who plays Sally Bowles as she was always meant to be played. (11/2/87) (Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 869-0550. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

The Cherry Orchard—Even the fine performances of Erland Josephson as wistful, hapless Gaev and Željko Ivanek as scruffy, passionate Trofimov cannot shed light on Peter Brook's opaque production of Chekhov's masterpiece. (2/8/88) (Majestic, 651 Fulton St., about a block east of Flatbush Ave., Brooklyn. 1-718 636-4100. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8, and Sundays at 7. Matinées Saturdays at 3 and Sundays at 2.)

Circle Repertory Company—CAVE LIFE, by David Steven Rappoport, is a poignant, amusing, and highly theatrical play that pictures insanity as a ménage à trois between a man, his unbalanced wife, and the hallucination she lives with. The excellent cast, led by Robin Bartlett, Bruce McCarty, and Mark Blum, is directed by Paul Lazarus. (Reviewed in this issue.) (99 Seventh Ave. S. 924-7100. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8, and Sundays at 7:30. Matinées Saturdays at 2 and Sundays at 3.)

Equity Library Theatre—A revival of THE ELEPHANT MAN, Bernard Pomerance's 1979 play, is the fifth in this season's series of eight productions. (Equity Library Theatre, 103rd St. and Riverside Dr. Nightly, except Mondays, at 8. Matinées Saturdays and Sundays at 2:30. Closes Sunday, Feb. 28. For information about tickets, for which contributions are requested, call 663-2028.)

Frankie and Johnny in the Clair de Lune—Terrence McNally's enchanting comedy about sex and the sudden onset of love in an apartment on Tenth Avenue in the Fifties. Kathy Bates and Kenneth Welsh are remarkable, under the direction of Paul Benedict. (11/9/87) (Westside Arts, 407 W. 43rd St. 541-8394. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8, and Sundays at 7. Matinées Saturdays and Sundays at 3.)

Into the Woods—The new musical by Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine is an attempt to show what lurks beneath the surface of conventional fairy tales. The amusing first half is like a musical staging of Bruno Bettelheim's "The Uses of Enchantment." The rather nasty second half degenerates into cheap philos-

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COVER: *Rea Irvin*

DRAWINGS: *Robert Mankoff, Michael Crawford, George Price, Lee Lorenz, Jack Ziegler, Charles Addams, Edward Koren, Robert Weber, J. B. Handelsman, William Steig, Roz Chast, Sam Gross, Tom Funk, Warren Miller, Richard Cline, Gudjon Olafsson, Arnie Levin, Henry Martin, Al Ross, Michael Maslin, Mischa Richter, James Stevenson, Ed Fisher, Bill Woodman, Dana Fradon*

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

ophy. The costumes (by Ann Hould-Ward) and sets (by Tony Straiges) are pretty to look at, and the songs are beautiful or funny—sometimes both. The superb cast, led by Bernadette Peters and Joanna Gleason, is directed by Mr. Lapine. (11/16/87) (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 246-6363. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

Loose Ends—Michael Weller's self-indulgent 1979 play, mired in seventies sensibility, is not helped by mundane performances from Terry Kinney and Jane Kaczmarek, as two vacuous, self-involved people trying to figure out what to do with their lives and each other. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Second Stage, Broadway at 76th St. 873-6103. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Saturdays at 2.)

A Midsummer Night's Dream—This is as much a celebration of Shakespeare's comedy as a presentation of it, with A. J. Antoon at the helm. The real source of magic lies in the beautiful scenery of Andrew Jackness and the rich, gorgeous score by Michael Ward. (1/25/88) (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

The No-Frills Revue—An unpretentious, jokey little show conceived and directed by Martin Charnin. Most of the lively songs—words and music—were written by Mr. Charnin, and the two funniest sketches were contributed by our distinguished alumnus Thomas Meehan. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 989-2020. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7:30. Matinées Sundays at 3.)

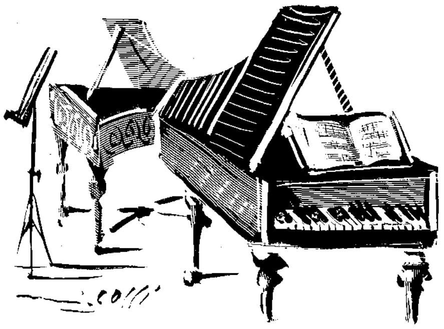
Oil City Symphony—Mike Craver, Mark Hardwick, Debra Monk, and Mary Murfitt, gifted and sophisticated singers and instrumentalists, appear as a quartet of dedicated hicks reuniting at their small-town high school in this very funny, very musical musical. Mr. Hardwick and Miss Monk, by the way, are alumni of the beguiling "Pump Boys and Dinettes" of blessed memory. (1/18/88) (Circle in the Square Downtown, 159 Bleecker St. 254-6330. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7. Matinées Sundays at 3.)

Penn & Teller—Back with an even tighter version of their wonderful 1985 show, this two-man team of stage-magic farceurs is probably the hippest thing in high culture since Talking Heads went mainstream. Directed by Art Wolff, with cameo appearances by Director of Covert Activities Marc Garland. (12/21/87) (Ritz, 219 W. 48th St. 582-4022. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8, and Sundays at 7:30. Matinées Saturdays and Sundays at 3.)

The Phantom of the Opera—The much ballyhooed Andrew Lloyd Webber musical is fun—if you're not bothered by the notion of theatre that cares not a whit for words and contains not one ghost of an idea. Except for the sets (by Maria Björnson), everything about the show is negligible, including the overhyped performances by Michael Crawford and Sarah Brightman in the leading roles. (2/8/88) (Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.)

Psycho Beach Party—A romp through early-sixties beach-blanket movies, written by Charles Busch and starring Mr. Busch as a Gidget-like figure with a Marnie-like problem. (8/10/87) (Players, 115 Macdougal St. 254-5076. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7. Matinées Sundays at 3.)

Sarafina!—This musical, an explosion of talent, has moved from Off Broadway to Broadway. An import from South Africa, it was conceived, written, and directed by Mbongeni Ngema, who also, with Hugh Masekela, composed and arranged the score. It is a show about a show that is put on by a brave group of high-school students in Soweto, and that dramatizes the events in their lives. The events are bleak, but the spirits are blazing, and the acting, dancing, and singing, to a local form of popular music called Mbaqanga, are a wonder. (11/9/87) (Cort, 138 W. 48th St. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)



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Serious Money—The Broadway production of Caryl Churchill's verse drama—though well played by an excellent cast led by Kate Nelligan, John Pankow, and Alec Baldwin—is a trade-off. The pace has been slowed down, making the plot easier to follow but also making it harder to be impressed by the limp verse and tepid satire. This play is too fascinated by money to chastise it. (12/14/87) (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.)

A Shayna Maidel—A well-wrought and deeply moving play by Barbara Lebow about a Polish-Jewish family torn apart by the events of the Hitler era. The production is beautifully directed by Mary B. Robinson and is enhanced by two extraordinary performances: one from Gordana Rashovich as a concentration-camp survivor and the other from Paul Sparer as the father who failed to get her and her mother out of Poland. The year 1946 is perfectly evoked by William Barclay's setting. Bring lots of Kleenex to this one, but expect to leave uplifted. (11/30/87) (Westside Arts, 407 W. 43rd St. 541-8394. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

Symphony of Rats—A play written and directed by Richard Foreman. A production of the Ontological-Hysteric Theatre and the Wooster Group. (Performing Garage, 33 Wooster St. 966-3651. Wednesday and Thursday at 8; Friday and Saturday at 7 and 10; and Sunday at 8. Closes Sunday, Feb. 21.)

Tamara—A participatory theatrical encounter, in which the audience must literally follow the characters as they move from room to room in what is supposed to be Gabriele D'Annunzio's villa. Pre-happening cocktails and a buffet at intermission are included in the rather hefty ticket price ($90 to $135). (7th Regiment Armory, Park Ave. at 66th St. 307-7171. Nightly, except Thursdays, at 8; cocktails at 7:30. Matinées Saturdays and Sundays at 2; cocktails at 1:30.)

Long Runs—**BROADWAY BOUND:** A rueful comedy in which Neil Simon studies the middle-class depths from which he sprang and has kept springing. (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200. Mondays through Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **CATS:** Some twenty poems about cats by T. S. Eliot, set to music by Andrew Lloyd Webber. A mighty spectacle about mighty little, owing its effectiveness to Trevor Nunn's direction and to the sets and costumes by John Napier. (Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.) . . . **A CHORUS LINE:** A group of young dancers audition for a handful of chorus jobs in a show not yet in rehearsal, and by the time the evening is over we know everything about all of them. (Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.) . . . **DRIVING MISS DAISY:** Frances Sternhagen and Morgan Freeman star in Alfred Uhry's play, which tells of the growing attachment of a cranky old woman in Atlanta to her black chauffeur. Directed by Ron Lagomarsino. Starting Tuesday, Feb. 23, Earle Hyman replaces Mr. Freeman. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 564-8038. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** 11,576 performances so far. (Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7:30. Matinées Sundays at 3.) . . . **FENCES:** Billy Dee Williams now has the lead in August Wilson's powerful play. Lloyd Richards directed. (46th Street Theatre, 226 W. 46th St. 246-0102. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **42ND STREET:** A musical based on the old Warner Brothers movie, and by no means an improvement on it. Directed and choreographed by the late Gower Champion. (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 398-0280. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8:15. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2:15, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **ME AND MY GIRL:** An infelicitously rehabilitated British musical out of the thirties, with Jim Dale in the starring role. (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 246-0102. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** Gary Morris and Anthony Crivello star in the musical adaptation of the Victor Hugo novel, but the real standouts of the production are the settings, by John Napier, and the lighting, by David Hersey. (Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Saturdays at 2.) . . . **THE NERD:** This farce by the late Larry Shue (author of "The Foreigner") is a source of laughter from beginning to end. With Peter MacNicol, in the title role, and Robert Joy. (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 944-9450. Tuesdays through Saturdays, except Wednesday, Feb. 17, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays, except Feb. 17, and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3. Special performances Monday, Feb. 15, at 8, and Sunday, Feb. 21, at 7:30.) . . . **NUNSENSE:** A musical comedy by Dan Goggin. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **STARLIGHT EXPRESS:** A bore on roller skates. (Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 586-6510. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **STEEL MAGNOLIAS:** This first play by Robert Harling is set in a beauty shop in a small town in Louisiana, and consists mainly of the often amusing, wisecracking chatter of the proprietress, her assistant, and four steady customers. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 924-8782. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 6 and 10; and Sundays at 7:30. Matinées Sundays at 3.)

MISCELLANY

Light Opera of Manhattan—Presenting Gilbert and Sullivan's **THE MIKADO.** (Playhouse 91, at 316 E. 91st St. 831-2000. Wednesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays at 2 and Saturdays and Sundays at 3:30.)

Liliane Montevecchi on the Boulevard—A one-woman show. Opens Monday, Feb. 15. (Kaufman, 534 W. 42nd St. 279-4200. Mondays and Wednesdays through Sundays at 8. Matinées Saturdays and Sundays at 5.)

DANCE

New York City Ballet—Final performances of the season—Tuesday, Feb. 16, at 8: "Bugaku," "Ives, Songs," and "Bournonville Divertissements." . . . ¶ Wednesday, Feb. 17, at 8: "Stravinsky Violin Concerto," "Ives, Songs," and "Bournonville Divertissements." . . . ¶ Thursday, Feb. 18, at 8: "Bugaku," "Opus 19/The Dreamer," and "Symphony in C" (with guest artists Nina Ananiashvili and Andris Liepa, of the Bolshoi Ballet). . . . ¶ Friday, Feb. 19, at 8, and Saturday, Feb. 20, at 2: "Coppélia." . . . ¶ Saturday, Feb. 20, at 8: "Bugaku," "Afternoon of a Faun," "An-

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

tique Epigraphs," and "Symphony in C" (with Miss Ananiashvili and Mr. Liepa). . . . ¶ Sunday, Feb. 21, at 1: "Raymonda Variations," "Afternoon of a Faun," "Antique *Epigraphs," and "Stravinsky Violin Concerto."* . . . ¶ Sunday, Feb. 21, at 7: A benefit program of works to be announced (with Miss Ananiashvili and Mr. Liepa). (New York State Theatre. 870-5570.)

Elisa Monte Dance Company—Presenting three new works—"Death of an Analogue," "Turtles Eat Bones," and "Audentity"—and "Dreamtime." (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Tuesday, Feb. 16, at 7; Wednesday through Saturday, Feb. 17-20, at 8; and Sunday, Feb. 21, at 2 and 8.)

Risa Jaroslow and Dancers—Presenting "Nahual" (première; with musical accompaniment from the Peter Zummo Orchestras); "Chair Dance for Two Jewish Mothers" (première; with guest artist Vicky Shick); "Towel Dance for Mother and Daughter;" and "Backward Glance." (Marymount Manhattan Theatre, 221 E. 71st St. 924-0077. Thursday through Saturday, Feb. 18-20, at 8:30, and Sunday, Feb. 21, at 3.)

Mitchell Rose and Diane Epstein—In a program of contemporary dance. (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. Thursday through Saturday, Feb. 18-20, at 8; Sunday, Feb. 21, at 3; and Monday, Feb. 22, at 8.)

NIGHT LIFE

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which bold-face type is used to pick out a few of the more notable performers in town. . . . ¶ Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives that are subject to last-minute change; it is therefore always advisable to call ahead.)

Algonquin Hotel, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—**ANDREA MARCOVICCI,** an actress (she was Woody Allen's girlfriend in "The Front") and singer who carries a torch for old love songs, performs in the Oak Room Tuesdays at nine-fifteen and Wednesdays through Saturdays at nine-fifteen and eleven-fifteen. Dining.

Ballroom, 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—A big cabaret on the edge of Chelsea, in the heart of the fur and fashion-student districts. **JACK JONES** (no relation to Elvin, George, Grace, Grandpa, Hank, Jo, Philly Joe, Rickie Lee, or Spike) sings here at nine on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, and at nine and eleven Thursdays through Saturdays.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—A really blue but not really New York jazz club; the idea for the brass plaques that are engraved with the names of visiting jazz stars and embedded in the blue tables appears to have been borrowed from Hollywood. Brazilian music, a trend all over, has reached near-carnival proportions here. Monday, Feb. 15, **LOREMIL MACHADO & THE SARAVA BAHIA BAND;** Tuesday through Sunday, Feb. 16-21, Sergio Mendes & Brasil '88; Monday, Feb. 22, *trumpeter* **CLAUDIO RODITI'S** *combo;* and starting Tuesday, Feb. 23, the New York Samba Band and the percussion-and-vocal team of **AIRTO & FLORA PURIM.** Music from nine. Dining.

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—On the east side of the building, behind a dusty display window, there's a New York *Post* review of a Santana concert that took place here circa 1978; curatorial neglect seems to have made it a permanent exhibit. Inside, there's an up-to-date variety show; it's hosted by a performance artist called Mike, and it features **JIM TURNER** (of Duck's Breath Mystery Theatre), Marc Weiner (a juggler), *Village Voice* scribe Cynthia Heimel, the Thunder Thigh Revue, and others. It's here on Thursday, Feb. 18, and gone on Friday, Feb. 19, when **NRBQ,** a rock-and-roll band that's been at it since the late sixties, begins a two-night stand. Shows Sundays through Thursdays at eight and eleven, and Fridays and Saturdays at eight-thirty and eleven-thirty. Dining.

Bradley's, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—A great up-close view from a barstool (unless there are a lot of standees, which is usually the case) of first-rate pianists and bassists. **RED MITCHELL,** the house bassist for the nonce, works with **HANK JONES,** a model of delicate swing, through Saturday, Feb. 20; with **NORMAN SIMMONS** on Sunday, Feb. 21; and with Mike Melvoin starting Monday, Feb. *22. Music from nine-forty-five. Dining.*

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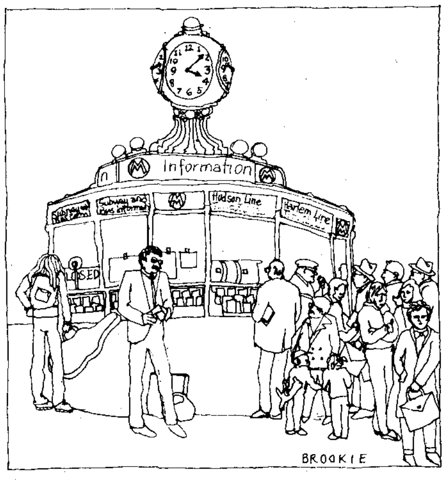
Carlos I, 432 Sixth Ave., at 10th St. (982-3260)—Long communal tables swathed in pink and a bandstand panelled in oak. On Tuesday, Feb. 16, about two dozen jazz people—including **ROY ELDRIDGE, DOC CHEATHAM, TOMMY FLANAGAN, CARRIE SMITH,** and **BUDDY TATE**—perform for the benefit of singer Norman Mapp, who is ill. **OLIVER LAKE,** one of the alto voices of the World Saxophone Quartet, leads his own quartet Wednesday through Sunday, Feb. 17-21. **AHMAD JAMAL,** a pianist whose florid, dramatic style causes some people to nod their heads in appreciation (Miles Davis was an early admirer) and others to shake theirs in dismay, moves in with his quartet on Tuesday, Feb. *23.* Mondays belong to baritone-sax man **HAMIET BLUIETT** and his big band. Music from nine. Dining.

Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The figures on the walls of the Café Carlyle—a nude at her easel; a leaping poodle; a guitarist in a harlequin outfit; an unpedigreed dog with a bonnet in its mouth—are by Marcel Vertès, and the elegant gent on the piano bench is **GEORGE SHEARING. LYNN SEATON** is on bass, and **LILIAN CARMONA** is on drums. Shows Tuesdays through Saturdays at ten and midnight. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in the Bemelmans Bar, **BARBARA CARROLL** presides at the piano from nine-forty-five Tuesdays through Saturdays.

Fat Tuesday's, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7902)—There's not a lot of elbow- or headroom in this downstairs jazz club, but the musicians sometimes make you forget all about it. **GARY BURTON,** a vibraharpist who sweeps across his instrument with now three, now four mallets tapping out lush, ringing solos, is here with a quartet Tuesday through Sunday, Feb. 16-21. A trio run by **HAL GALPER,** Phil Woods' longtime pianist, performs Tuesday and Wednesday, Feb. 23-24. On Mondays, guitarist-inventor **LES PAUL,** the Thomas Edison of reverb, leads a trio. Music from eight. Dining.

Greene Street, 101 Greene St. (925-2415)—Only slightly smaller than an airplane hangar but considerably fancier. On clear nights, the piano, situated in a grove of palms in the south-central region of the dining room, is visible from the bar. **HAL SCHAEFER** is on duty Tuesday through Saturday, Feb. 16-20; bassist **TODD COOLMAN** joins him Friday and Saturday. Sets begin at seven Tuesdays through Thursdays, at seven-thirty on Fridays and Saturdays, and at six-thirty on Sundays.

Gregory's, 1149 First Ave., at 63rd St. (371-2220)—A small, dark bar with ancient marching-band instruments on the walls, Art Tatum and Earl Hines on the jukebox, and an upright piano that seats four (not counting the pianist). **BROOKS KERR,** a major fund of Ellingtonia, is on the right side of the piano Mondays through Fridays from five-forty-five to nine-forty-five. Alicia Sherman, whose duties here include tending bar, comes out from behind it at ten Wednesdays through Saturdays to sing with a quartet. Mondays (post-Kerr) are claimed by singer Stan Edwards' *trio, and Tuesdays by guitarist* **CHUCK WAYNE'S** threesome.



J's, 2581 Broadway, at 97th St. (666-3600)—An upper West Side spa, one flight up from the hurly-burly. Jazz people are on the premises nightly except Sundays, when a jukebox stocked with sixties rock and soul lights up. Music from eight Mondays through Thursdays, and from nine Fridays and Saturdays. Dining.

Jan Wallman's, 49 W. 44th St. (764-8930)—A room fit for a singer, an accompanist or two and a party of forty-eight. **BARBARA LEA,** a fine singer and a whistler who could knock a bird out of a tree, will be around on Friday, Feb 19, with pianist **WES MC AFEE. JUDY KRESTON** sings on Saturday, Feb. 20, and Monday, Feb. *22.* Shows at nine and eleven. Dining.

Knickerbocker, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—A busy corner bar and restaurant with a piano at the center of things. **DON FRIEDMAN** presides, with bassist **HARVIE SWARTZ** next to him, Tuesday through Saturday, Feb. 16-20; **JOANNE BRACKEEN** and **CECIL MC BEE** swing into action Tuesday, Feb. *23.* Pianist **HARRY CONNICK, JR.,** the latest good news from New Orleans, flies all by himself on Sunday and Monday, Feb. 21-22. Music from nine-thirty.

Knitting Factory, 47 E. Houston St., near Mulberry St. (219-3055)—Probably the only place in town that features avant-garde jazz, advanced and intermediate rock, Easy Now medicinal tea, homemade yogurt, and smoothies. Tuesday, Feb. 16, is the room's first birthday; saxophonist **JOHN ZORN,** Pianosaurus (a rock group that employs toy instruments), and others play birthday music. The **CUCUMBERS,** a Hoboken pop band, perform on Wednesday, Feb. 17; alto saxophonist **CARLOS WARD** brings in a quartet on Thursday, Feb. 18; **TIREZ TIREZ,** a quintet that plays a cool, glassy kind of minimalist rock, will be here on Friday, Feb. 19; and **HUGO LARGO,** a percussionless folk-rock quartet that likes molasses tempos and dense, dreamy lyrics, has the floor on Saturday, Feb. 20. Activity from nine or so.

Lone Star Café, 61 Fifth Ave., at 13th St. (242-1664)—This hangout for homesick Texans, French tourists, and local yokels brags that it's "the biggest and best honky-tonk north of Abilene." Big it ain't, but it does feature some genuine honky-tonk music, a souvenir stand, and TV monitors (which permit you to watch the action onstage in case your view of it is obscured by a cowboy or a structural element). The lineup: Monday, Feb. 15, Rory Block; Wednesday, Feb. 17, a band co-led by soul singer **LESTER CHAMBERS** (of the Chambers Brothers) and bassist Harvey Brooks; Thursday and Friday, Feb. 18-19, New Orleans soul singer **IRMA THOMAS;** and Monday, Feb. 22, accordionist **STANLEY (BUCKWHEAT) DURAL** and his zydeco band. Music after nine. Hot vittles.

Michael's Pub, *211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)*—A mid-Manhattan pub for well-heeled gents and their high-heeled foxes. A quintet directed by the fleet young guitarist **FRANK VIGNOLA** is recreating the Old World sounds of the Quintette du Hot Club de France, the all-string ensemble founded by Django Reinhardt and Stéphane Grappelli in 1934. **MICHELE BAUTIER,** got up as a *blond thirties-style Venus, con*tributes vocals in Français, Anglais, and Franglais ("Darling, Je Vous Aime Beaucoup"). Shows Tuesday through Saturday, Feb. 16-20, at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty. Dining. Closed Sundays.

Mikell's, 760 Columbus Ave., at 97th St. (864-8832)—A spiffy uptown bar and restaurant, with signed photographs of some swinging non-musicians on the walls (Reggie Jackson smiling shyly, Dave Winfield tuning up in the cage) and some heavy hitters on the bandstand. **ART FARMER,** a flugelhornist who keeps his blazer buttoned while going about

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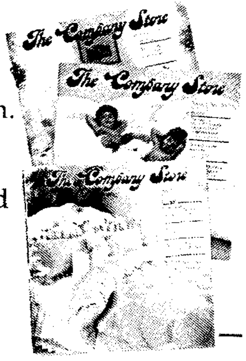

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

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his lyrical business, will be here Friday and Saturday, Feb. 19-20, with a quintet that features tenor saxophonist **CLIFFORD JORDAN.** Music from about ten until two.

RITZ, 119 E. 11th St. (254-2800)—Fifty years ago, people practiced the jitterbug and the foxtrot in this ballroom; today's patrons listen mainly to rock, which issues from speakers the size of mobile homes, and sometimes engage in a combination of exercise and intimacy known as slam dancing. Friday, Feb. 19, Tackhead; Saturday, Feb. 20, Mission U.K.; and Wednesday, Feb. 24, the Red Hot Chili Peppers. Shows begin at nine Sundays through Thursdays, and at eleven Fridays and Saturdays.

SOUNDS OF BRAZIL, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—A big, cheerful room, painted a light tropical blue, where you can pick 'em up and set 'em down to sounds from Brazil, Africa, the Caribbean, and elsewhere. Ample seating for the contemplative. Tuesday, Feb. 16, Frankie Ruiz' salsa ensemble; Wednesday, Feb. 17, Brazilian percussionist-singer **NANA VASCONCELOS;** Friday, Feb. 19, the System Band; Saturday, Feb. 20, **MIKATA;** and Tuesday and Wednesday, Feb. 23-24, the Itals, a reggae vocal trio, with the Roots Radics, a Jamaican studio band. Music from nine Tuesdays through Thursdays, and from eleven on Fridays and Saturdays. Dining. Closed Sundays and Mondays.

SPEAKEASY, 107 Macdougal St. (598-9670)—A central Village lounge for folkies and others who practice low-decibel (but not necessarily low-voltage) music. **JESSE WINCHESTER,** a good old Memphis boy who moved to Canada during the Vietnam War and wrote some fine lonesome country airs ("Brand New Tennessee Waltz," among them) about the world he'd left behind, has the floor here on Friday, Feb. 19. Shows nightly from about eight-thirty. Dining.

SWEET BASIL, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—**ART BLAKEY,** all hard-bop muscle, will be in this pine-panelled Village meetinghouse with his crew of **JAZZ MESSENGERS** through Monday, Feb. 22. On Tuesday, Feb. 23, the veteran pianist and mystic **SUN RA** enters in his flowing robes and sequinned space traveller's chapeau to lead his Arkestra through some swing numbers and some cosmic material. Shows from ten. Dining.

SWEETWATERS, 170 Amsterdam Ave., at 67th St. (873-4100)—What would a night club be without smoke, mirrors, and a white piano? It wouldn't be this sleek jazz and soul room. **CISSY HOUSTON,** who sang in the sixties with the Sweet Inspirations (who cooed and shouted behind Aretha Franklin) and now sometimes sings behind her boffo daughter, Whitney, will be here Thursday through Saturday, Feb. 18-20. Music after nine. Dining.

TRAMPS, 125 E. 15th St. (777-5077)—"Irish" is what the canopy above the entrance to this bar says, but rock and roll is what the boys and girls in the back room mainly do. The **SURREAL MC COYS,** a local country-rock quintet, call this place home on Mondays. The other night, at the Bottom Line, where they opened for the cowboy trio Riders in the Sky, they did a Jim Reeves song, a couple of riding-down-the-highway-of-life numbers (one of which featured **KEVIN TRAINOR,** the band's singer and ringleader, playing careening slide guitar, using an old honky-tonk prop, a bottle of Bud, as a slide), "I Guess I Woke Up on the Right Side of the Wrong Bed Again" (a piece of Trainor whimsy that he called "a little Chinese folk song"), and a passionately declaimed song about the right to speak your mind in the U.S.A. Shows after (sometimes long after) nine-thirty.

VILLAGE GATE, 160 Bleecker St. (475-5120)—In the Terrace Bar, pianist **MULGREW MILLER** and bassist **IRA COLEMAN** hold forth nightly except Mondays, when Latin-leaning piano trios are on duty. Fridays through Sundays, from about six until nine-thirty, **PATTI BOWN** can be found at the piano, rocking and swaying beneath one of her homemade picture hats. . . . ¶ Two more pianists, **ABDULLAH IBRAHIM** and **RANDY WESTON,** play in the downstairs rumpus room at eight on Monday, Feb. 15. On Friday and Saturday, Feb. 19-20, **JULIUS HEMPHILL,** the World Saxophone Quartet's chief composer, directs a big band, and downtown saxophonist **JOHN ZORN** oversees a quartet. Sets at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty.

VILLAGE VANGUARD, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—People from all over the world descend the stairs to this ancient jazz club; many of them later emerge from it in an excited condition. **DOROTHY DONEGAN** performs here Tuesday through Sunday, Feb. 16-21. A Donegan performance usually features a whirligig display of Art Tatum-style piano (during which one is likely to hear stride passages, rhapsodic Gershwin, a patch of Rachmaninoff, an ornate bossa nova) and a fair amount of mugging and foot-stomping fooling around. She accompanies her playing with humming and low, satisfied "aw"s; she hobnobs with the customers; she plays standing up and one-handed; she hitches her skirt up in a getting-down-to-business gesture, cocks an eyebrow, and heads into some rocking boogie-woogie. She has a bassist and a drummer, **ARVELL SHAW** and **RAY MOSCA,** who slip in and out of view. **DAVID MURRAY,** the tenor voice of the World Saxophone Quartet, brings in his own foursome on Tuesday, Feb. 23. Music from ten.

WEST END, 2911 Broadway, at 113th St. (666-8750)—The big room in this student rest stop (Columbia U. is across the street) has a non-institutional cafeteria, a bar that can seat a marching band, and a jukebox. The smaller room has tables, booths, a couple of hanging plants, and live jazz. Trumpeter **JORDAN SANDKE** leads a quartet Wednesday through Sunday, Feb. 17-21. On Mondays, comedians stand up and fall down. Shows from about nine.

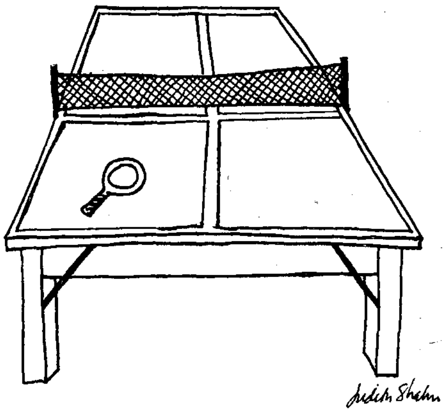
ZINNO, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—If you like pictures of cows, there's a good one here, by the British painter Malcolm Morley, of some Holsteins adrift in a Turneresque landscape. There's also jazz, which flows peaceably from a passageway between the front-room bar and the back-room restaurant. Cornettist **RUBY BRAFF** will be here through Saturday, Feb. 20, roaming through his famous lower register; pianist **JOHN BUNCH** and bassist **MICHAEL MOORE** keep him company. On Sundays, **GENE BERTONCINI** and Michael Moore play guitar-bass duets. Music from eight every night but Sunday, when it begins at seven.

JAZZ / ROCK / PERSONAL APPEARANCES / PERFORMANCE ART, ETC.

JERRY HUNT AND ANNEA LOCKWOOD—Alternative Museum, 17 White St. 966-4444. Wednesday, Feb. 17, at 8.

TOM PAXTON—P.S. 41, at 116 W. 11th St. Friday, Feb. 19, at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.

BLUES FESTIVAL—Friday, Feb. 19, at 8: Napoleon Strickland's Mississippi Fife and Drum Band, James (Son) Thomas, and the Jelly Roll Kings. . . . ¶ Saturday, Feb. 20, at 8: Eddie (The Chief) Clearwater, Otis Rush, and Zora Young. (Triplex, 199 Chambers St. 618-1980.)



JOHN BERND AND JENNIFER MONSON—P.S. 122, at 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288. Friday through Sunday, Feb. 19-21, at 9.

LEROY JENKINS AND FELICIA NORTON—Midtown Y 344 E. 14th St. 673-2207. Saturday, Feb. 20 at 8, and Sunday, Feb. 21, at 3 and 8.

MAJOR HOLLEY QUINTET—St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. Sunday, Feb. 21, at 7:30. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.

BOYS OF THE LOUGH—With Bill Monroe and the Bluegrass Boys, and Garrison Keillor. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Tuesday, Feb. 23, at 8.)

THE KITCHEN—Wednesday, Feb. 17: Gayle Tufts "Adolph's Valet," with Tom McCarthy Robert Palumbo, and Ellen Spirer. . . ¶ Thursday, Feb. 18: Gayle Tufts and Karla Barker. . . . ¶ Friday, Feb. 19: Taylor Mead, Jose Abete, and Valerie Caris. . . . ¶ Saturday, Feb. 20: "Carnival of Sleaze," a series of individual performances by Karen Finley, Andy Soma, Kembra Pfahler, and others. (512 W. 19th St. 255-5793. Evenings at 8:30.)

FRANKLIN FURNACE—Laurie Carlos, Jessica Hagedorn, and Robbie McCauley in "Teenytown." (112 Franklin St. 925-4671. Thursday through Sunday, Feb. 18-21, at 8:30.)

JAZZ CENTER OF NEW YORK—Friday, Feb. 19, at 9: James Jabbo Ware & the Me We & Them Orchestra. . . . ¶ Saturday, Feb. 20, at 9: The Curtis Lundy quartet. (380 Lafayette St. 505-5660.)

ART

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

CECILE GRAY BAZELON—Precisionist paintings of long hallways and similar interiors. Through March 5. (Perlow, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St.)

VARUJAN BOGHOSIAN—New collages. Through March 19. (Cordier & Ekstrom, 417 E. 75th St.)

ADOLPH GOTTLIEB (1903-74)—Eight paintings on *horizontal canvases. Through Thursday, Feb.* 18. (Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St.)

MARSDEN HARTLEY (1877-1943) / **WALT KUHN** (1877-1949)—Paintings and drawings from throughout his career. / Landscapes. Through Feb. 27. (Salander-O'Reilly, 22 E. 80th St. Open Mondays.) . . . ¶ Vanderwoude Tananbaum, 24 E. 81st St., is showing late paintings by Hartley.

MARK LEITHAUSER—Paintings, drawings, and prints of fantasy landscapes and still-lifes by an artist whose style has been influenced by Dutch and American past masters. Through Feb. 29. (Coe Kerr, 49 E. 82nd St. Open Mondays.)

PICASSO (1881-1973)—Drawings from his last ten years. Through Feb. 27. (Hirschl & Adler, 21 E. 70th St.)

PAUL RESIKA—Pastels and oils of Provincetown and vicinity. Through Feb. 27. (Graham, 1014 Madison Ave., at 78th St.)

DONALD SULTAN—Prints and drawings from the past five years, complementing his show at the Museum of Modern Art. Through Feb. 27. (Hamilton, 19 E. 71st St.)

ART/ARTIFACT—A hundred and sixty African objects, most dating from the early nineteenth century, have been culled from the collections of three museums, which originally gathered them for ethnographic purposes. Through April 17. (Center for African Art, 54 E. 68th St. Opens at noon on Sundays.)

GROUP SHOWS—At the **BABCOCK,** 20 E. 67th St.: Early modernist paintings by Alfred Maurer, Ben Benn, and Marsden Hartley. Through Feb. 27. . . . **CDS GALLERY,** 13 E. 75th St.: Eighteen artists of the New York School are each represented by a work on paper and a painting, selected by Irving Sandler. Through Feb. 27. (Open Mondays.) . . . **SIMON-NEUMAN,** 42 E. 76th St.: Sculptures, drawings, and

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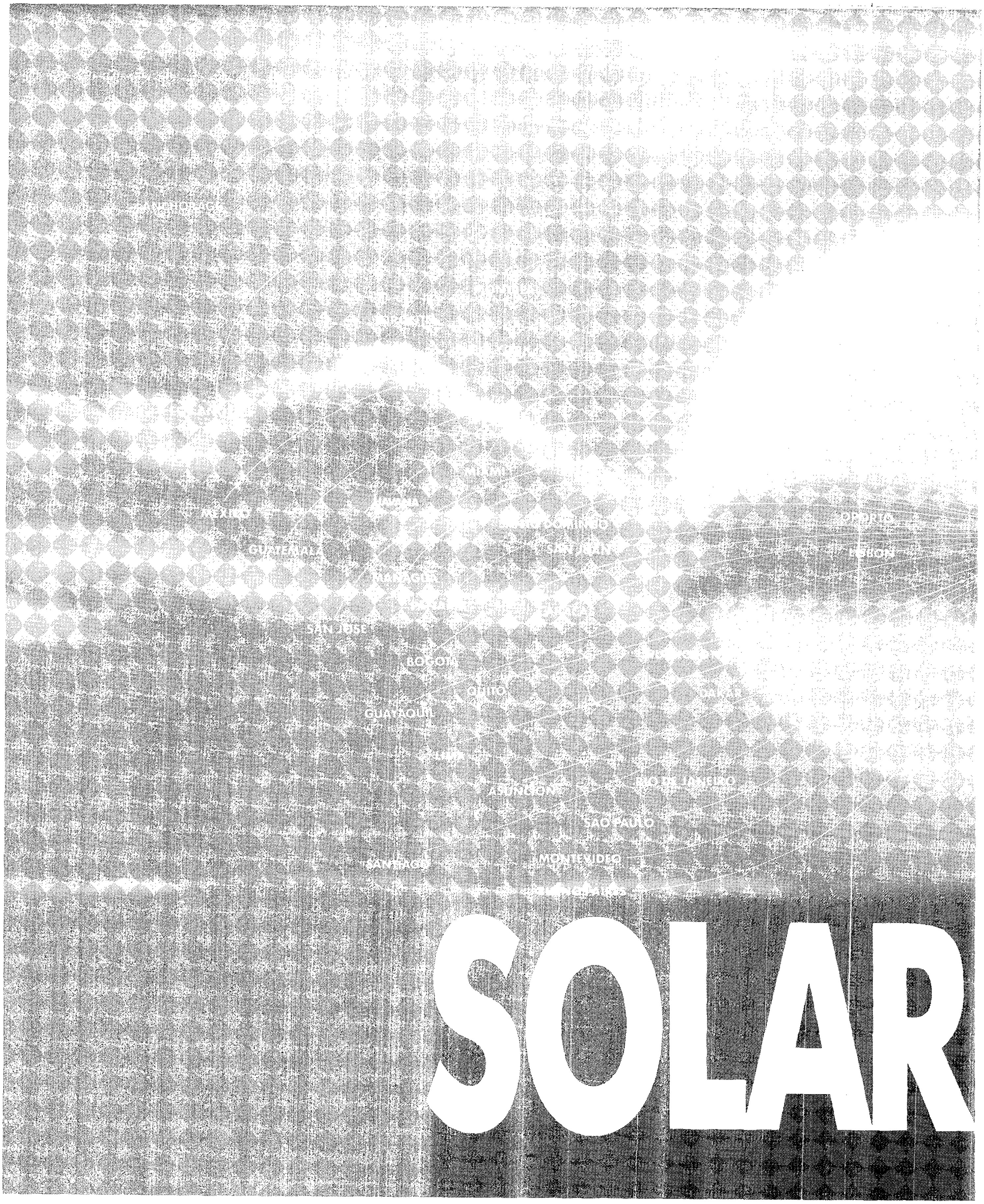
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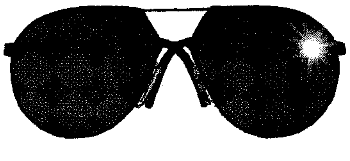

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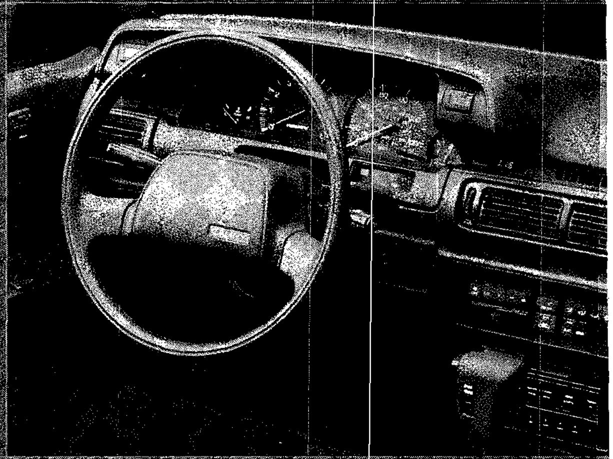

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paintings by Barbro Bäckström, David Storey, and Alan Uglow. Through March 19. . . . **STAEMPFLI,** 47 E. 77th St.: Realist paintings and drawings by six contemporary Spanish artists, including Claudio Bravo and Antonio López García. Through Feb. 27.

GALLERIES—57TH STREET AREA

PAT ADAMS / EUGENIE BAIZERMAN (1899-1949)—Paintings and monoprints. / Small figurative oils. Through Saturday, Feb. 20. (Zabriskie, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. Open Mondays.)

THOMAS BANG—Sculptures combining such disparate materials as fabric and cast iron. Through March 2. (Ruth Siegel, 24 W. 57th St.)

RONALD BLADEN (1918-88) / **ANNE RYAN** (1889-1954)—Wood-and-aluminum wall sculptures in what has become a memorial exhibit for the artist, who died this month. / Paper-and-fabric collages. Through March 19. (Washburn, 41 E. 57th St.)

MATTHEW DAUB / PETER FRAENKEL—Realist watercolors of cityscapes. / Still-life oils. Through Feb. 27. (French, 41 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

RICHARD DEACON—Five large-scale sculptures. Through March 5. (Marian Goodman, 24 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

ADOLF DEHN (1895-1968)—A retrospective of prints. Through Feb. 27. (Associated American Artists, 20 W. 57th St.)

JIM DINE—New paintings. Through March 5. (Pace, 32 E. 57th St.)

LOIS DODD / AMY SCOTT—Landscapes of Maine and the Delaware Water Gap. / Still-life paintings on paper. Through March 2. (Fischbach, 24 W. 57th St.)

RAYMON ELOZUA—Mixed-medium wall sculptures are among these works lamenting the decline of the steel industry in America. Through Saturday, Feb. 20. (Lamagna, 50 W. 57th St.)

SONDRA FRECKELTON—Recent watercolor still-lifes. Through March 2. (Schoelkopf, 50 W. 57th St.)

PHILIP GEIGER—Urban landscapes on panels, and paintings of nudes. Through Feb. 27. (Tatistcheff, 50 W. 57th St.)

DIETER HACKER—Figurative paintings and drawings. Through Feb. 27. (Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

JOHN HULL / STEVE CURRIE—Paintings depicting baseball games in small towns. / Freestanding and wall sculptures made primarily of lead. Through March 5. (Borgenicht, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

DAVID HUMPHREY—New surreal paintings. Through Feb. 27. (McKee, 41 E. 57th St.)

RICHARDS JARDEN—Laminated-paper sculptures that sit atop faux-marble columns. Through Feb. 27. (De Nagy, 41 W. 57th St.)

GWEN JOHN (1876-1939)—*Thirty drawings and watercolors, with examples from her entire career, and three oils.* Through Feb. 27. (Davis & Langdale, 231 E. 60th St.)

TERENCE LA NOUE / KENNETH NOLAND—Mixed-medium paintings. Through Feb. 27. / New minimalist canvases, with Plexiglas additions. Through Saturday, Feb. 20. (Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St.)

LEO MANSO / SIDEO FROMBOLUTI—Collages and assemblages. / Charcoal drawings of figures and landscapes. Through March 2. (Armstrong, 50 W. 57th St.)

ANDRÉ MASSON (1896-1987)—Bronze sculptures and related drawings. Through March 5. (Marisa del Re, 41 E. 57th St.)

HENRY MOORE (1898-1986)—Prints from late in his career. Through Feb. 27. (Alex Rosenberg, 20 W. 57th St.)

PAUL ROTTERDAM / ALBERTO GIACOMETTI (1901-66)—Recent paintings and drawings. Through March 12. / Sculptures, paintings, drawings, and prints. Through April 30. (Herstand, 24 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

ROBERT ZAKANITCH / MILAN KUNC—Chairs and cherubs are among the images painted on abstract backgrounds. / Photocollages. Through Feb. 27. (Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St.)

GROUP SHOWS—At the **GALERIE ST. ETIENNE,** 24 W. 57th St.: Paintings, drawings, and prints by Lovis Corinth, Käthe Kollwitz, and Paula Modersohn-Becker. Through March 12. . . . **KENT,** 41 E. 57th St.: Sculptures by Richard Artschwager, James Lee Byars, and Joel Shapiro. Through March 5. . . . **TILTON,** 24 W. 57th St.: Paintings and drawings by ten artists which were first exhibited by the artist-dealer Betty Parsons. Jackson Pollock, Agnes Martin, and Barnett Newman are among those included. Through Feb. 27.

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GALLERIES—SoHo

VITO ACCONCI—Several sets of annotated photographs, taken in 1969-70 (and printed recently), that are based on games the artist played with a Kodak Instamatic 124. The texts describe the rules of the games. Through March 5. (Alexander, 59 Wooster St. A retrospective of Mr. Acconci's work is at the Museum of Modern Art.)

ROBERT ACKERMAN—Recent geometric abstractions. Through March 12. (Thorp, 103 Prince St.)

JOHN ARMLEDER—Works on paper. Through Saturday, Feb. 20. (Newburg, in a new location, at 580 Broadway.)

JENNIFER BARTLETT—Four large paintings, plus wood sculptures of the rowboats and houses that appear in the paintings. Through Feb. 27. (Cooper, 155 Wooster St.)

BRUNO CECCOBELLI—Wall sculptures. Through March 12. (Shainman, 560 Broadway.)

CHARLES CLOUGH—Recent abstract paintings. Through March 15. (Hanson, 415 West Broadway.)

LOUIS COMTOIS—New multiple-panel color-field paintings. Through Feb. 27. (Meisel, 141 Prince St.)

BILL CREEVY—Conventional and idiosyncratic pastel still-lifes and landscapes. Through Feb. 27. (First Street Gallery, 560 Broadway.)

HANNE DARBOVEN—Photocollages. Through Feb. 27. (Castelli, 142 Greene St.)

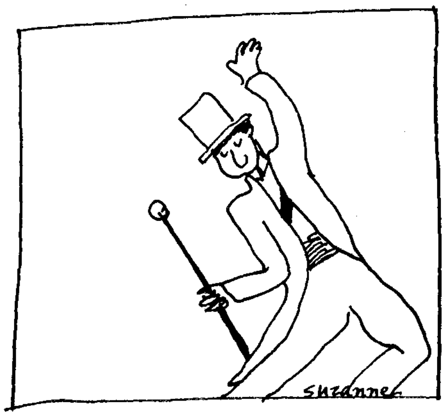
GENE DAVIS (1920-85)—A survey of his stripe paintings. Through Feb. 27. (Cowles, 420 West Broadway.)

HENRY FINKELSTEIN—Bosky landscapes by an artist who counts Bonnard as a significant influence. Through March 2. (Prince Street Gallery, 121 Wooster St. Opens daily, except Mondays, at noon.)

STEVE GIANAKOS—A new set of satirical black-on-white paintings. Through March 12. (Toll, 146 Greene St.)

GRACE HARTIGAN—Figurative paintings. Through March 5. (Gruenebaum, 415 West Broadway.)

RONI HORN / DONALD LIPSKI—A sculpture installation. / Three sculptures made from mooring buoys the artist found about a hundred and fifty miles from the sea, in a Washington State scrapyard. Through March 5. (Germans van Eck, 420 West Broadway.) . . . ¶ Galerie Lelong, 20 W. 57th St., has additional work by Miss Horn.



CLETUS JOHNSON—Constructions and collages dating from 1974 to 1986. Through March 5. (Walls, 137 Greene St. Opens at 1 on Sundays.) . . . ¶ New work is on view at Castelli, 420 West Broadway. Through Feb. 27.

RICHARD KALINA—Abstract paintings. Through March 12. (McDonald, 560 Broadway.)

JANE KAUFMAN—Painted-and-collaged patchwork quilts. Through March 5. (Steinbaum, 132 Greene St.)

ROBERT KAUPELIS—Bright-colored abstract paintings and works on paper. Through March 1. (Jack, 138 Prince St. Open daily; opens Sundays at noon.)

STEVE KEISTER—Sculptures coupling wire-frame chairs or chair parts with abstract fibre-glass forms. Through March 5. (Blum Helman Warehouse, 80 Greene St.)

RONNIE LANDFIELD—Abstract paintings. Through March 3. (Haller, 415 West Broadway.)

MIMI KORACH LESSER / PATRICIA BRATNOBER—Paintings of the Scottish Highlands. / Floral watercolors. Through March 5. (Pindar, 127 Greene St.)

BERNARD MAISNER / SUZANNE VINCENT—Paintings on stretched paper and linen which resemble illuminated manuscripts. / Realist portraits and still-lifes. Through March 5. (Stux, 155 Spring St.)

ALLAN MCCOLLUM / DANIEL BUREN—Ten thousand hand-painted two-by-five-inch Hydrocal sculptures; no two are alike. / Drawings documenting an installation the artist designed for the Palais-Royal, in Paris. Through Feb. 27. (Weber, 142 Greene St.) . . . ¶ The prolific Mr. McCollum is showing another seventeen hundred of his sculptures at Nosei, 100 Prince St., and drawings at Pretto, 103 Sullivan St., which opens at 1.

DAVID MCDERMOTT AND PETER MCGOUGH—Thirty autobiographical drawings by these collaborators. Through Feb. 27. (Audiello, 142 Greene St.)

JOHN OKULICK—Monumental mixed-medium wall reliefs and freestanding cast-bronze sculptures. Through March 2. (Hoffman, 429 West Broadway.)

PEDRO PEREZ—Whimsical sculptures incorporating working clocks. Through March 5. (Pearl, 420 West Broadway.)

SIGMAR POLKE—Four paintings and a hundred drawings dating from 1963 to 1969. Through Feb. 27. (Boone, 417 West Broadway.)

RICHARD SABA—Large abstract acrylic paintings. Through March 2. (Milliken, 98 Prince St.)

CHRISTINA SCHLESINGER / TOMME POTTER—A series of paintings entitled "Twenty-one Ways of Looking at a Waterfall." / Silver-gelatin prints of aquatic subjects presented as abstractions. Through Feb. 28. (Trabia-MacAfee, 54 Greene St. Open Sundays.)

CAROLE SEBOROVSKI—Geometric abstractions on paper, wood, or metal. Through March 5. (Lorence-Monk, 568 Broadway.)

ERNEST SHAW—Plywood sculptures that the artist shaped with a chain saw and then painted. Through Saturday, Feb. 20. (Davidson, 415 West Broadway.)

NANCY SPERO—A two-gallery exhibit. Forty-three collaged drawings from her "Artaud Series," dated 1969-70. (Gladstone, 99 Greene St.) . . . ¶ "War Paintings," a series from the sixties. (Baer, 270 Lafayette St.) Both shows through March 5.

PAUL WALDMAN—A joint show of allegorical paintings and sculptures. Through Feb. 27. (Cadot, 470 Broome St., and Castelli, 420 West Broadway.)

ALLAN WEXLER—Proposals for houses, furniture, and other projects by this conceptual architect. Through March 12. (Feldman, 31 Mercer St.)

ROGER WILLIAMS—Monumental Corten-steel sculptures. Through March 5. (Littlejohn-Smith, 133 Greene St.)

GROUP SHOWS—At the **ESMAN,** 70 Greene St.: Drawings, paintings, and sculptures by eighteen artists who have been in residence

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

at the Edward Albee Foundation art colony, among them Denise Green, Michael David, and Mia Westerlund Roosen. Through March 5. . . . **INGBER,** 415 West Broadway: Paintings by young artists who have been influenced by the late painter Gretna Campbell, including Deborah Rosenthal, Christian White, and Elizabeth Higgins. Through March 5. . . . **MARCUS,** 578 Broadway: Works on paper by Jene Highstein, Ellen Phelan, Will Mentor, and others. Through Feb. 27. . . . **SZOKE,** 164 Mercer St.: Handmade-paper reliefs, sculptures, and collages by Sara Garden Armstrong, Charlotte Brown, Werner Pfeiffer, Phyllis Gaughran, and others. Through March 12. (Opens at noon on Saturdays.)

SCULPTURE—A pile of white granite rocks measuring thirteen feet across, by Richard Long, and six steel floor plates by Carl Andre are among these minimalist works. Through Feb. 27. (Sperone Westwater, 142 Greene St.)

OTHER GALLERIES

MACYN BOLT / KRZYSZTOF WODICZKO—Styrofoam wall sculptures. / Cibachrome prints of a slide project the artist did at Documenta 8. Through Feb. 28. (Bromm, 170 Avenue A, at 11th St. Opens at 1 Wednesdays through Sundays.)

BRUCE CONNER—Drawings, photograms, and collages by an artist who also makes experimental films. Through March 19. (56 Bleecker Street Gallery.)

HOWARD HALLE—New works. Through Feb. 28. (Nature Morte, 204 E. 10th St. Opens at noon Wednesdays through Sundays.)

ROY LICHTENSTEIN—His Picassos, dating from 1962 to 1964. Through March 31. (Gagosian, 521 W. 23rd St., near Eleventh Ave.)

WALTER MARTIN—Sculptures. Through Feb. 28. (P.P.O.W, 337 E. 8th St., near Avenue C. Opens at noon Wednesdays through Sundays.)

JUSTIN McCARTHY (1891-1977)—A retrospective of paintings and drawings. Through March 12. (Cavin-Morris, 100 Hudson St.)

SMALL WORKS SHOW—The twelfth annual, this year selected by Carlo Lamagna. Through March 11. (80 Washington Square East Galleries, New York University. Open Tuesday evenings until 7.)

P.S. 1—The main galleries have separate shows by Noriyuki Haraguchi (a sculptural installation), Jackie Winsor (sculptures), Richard Tuttle (sculptures), James Bishop (drawings and paintings), and Peter Fischli and David Weiss (sculptures, photographs, and a video), and a group show, called "The Logic of Display," of paintings and sculptures incorporating photographs. Through March 6. (46-01 21st St., Long Island City. Opens at noon Wednesdays through Sundays.)

GROUP SHOWS—At the **BURDEN,** 20 E. 23rd St.: Photographs and sculptures by John Baldessari, Annette Lemieux, Haim Steinbach, Mary Ellen Mark, and others, in an exhibit titled "The Return of the Hero." Through March 12. (Opens at noon.) . . . **FRANKLIN FURNACE,** 112 Franklin St.: Conceptual works *on the theme* "Products and Promotion," by, among others, Erika Rothenberg, Jenny Holzer, David Wojnarowicz, and Barbara Kruger. Through March 12. (Opens at noon.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

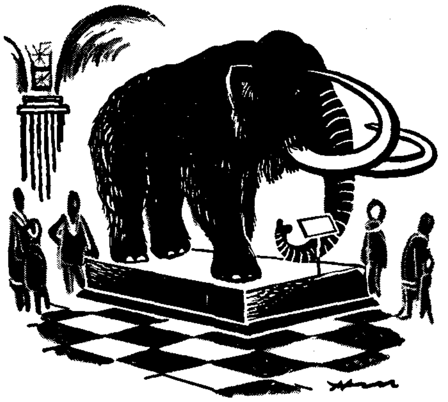
JOSEF ALBERS (1888-1976)—The Museum of Modern Art has mounted a show of thirty-eight black-and-white prints by this painter, whose photographs, dated from 1928 to 1932, were found after his death. See below, under "Museums," for dates and times.

TINA BARNEY—Large-scale color photographs of nice people in nice houses. Through Feb. 27. (Good, 39 Great Jones St.)

BERND AND HILLA BECHER—Up-close views of coal *mines, oil refineries, cement plants, and other* industrial sites. Through Feb. 27. (Sonnabend, 420 West Broadway.)

HENRI CARTIER-BRESSON—Photographs of India. Through Feb. 28. (International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Fridays, noon to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

ALLAN CHASANOFF—Still-lifes in black-and-white and color from the past three years. Through March 10. (Pfeifer, 568 Broadway.)



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ARTURO CUENCA—Hand-painted prints, including one that gives you the illusion of a park bench seen through frosted glass. Through Feb. 27. (Lieberman & Saul, 155 Spring St. Opens at noon on Saturdays.)

WALKER EVANS (1903-75)—Thirty photographs of African sculptures that were in a 1935 exhibit at the Museum of Modern Art are on view at the Metropolitan. See below, under "Museums," for dates and times.

NANCY GOLDRING—Cibachromes of tableaux the artist set up in her studio. Through March 5. (Baum, 109 Hudson St. Open Mondays.)

TONY MENDOZA / DIANE FARRIS—Black-and-white photographs on which anecdotes have been printed. / Manipulated prints. Through Saturday, Feb. 20. (Witkin, 415 West Broadway. Opens at noon on Saturdays.)

GILAD OPHIR / PEGGY ANN JONES—Black-and-white photographs. / Pinhole-camera prints. *Through Feb. 27. (Urdang, 23 E. 74th St.)*

ROBERT RAUSCHENBERG—Large-format Polaroids of Miami, and manipulated black-and-white prints. Through March 5. (Pace-MacGill, 11 E. 57th St.)

LAURIE SIMMONS—Cibachrome prints of the Venthaven Museum of Ventriloquism, in Fort Mitchell, Kentucky. Through Feb. 27. (Metro Pictures, 150 Greene St.)

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—A show of Fragonard paintings and drawings, which has travelled here from the Grand Palais, in Paris. Complementing this is the display of "The Progress of Love" at the Frick Collection (see below). . . . **PHOTOGRAPHY:** Prints of African art, made by Walker Evans. Through July 1. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Tuesday evenings until 8:45.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, 11 W. 53rd St.—An exhibit of Vito Acconci's work has as its centerpiece three reconstructed outdoor installations that are meant to be climbed through, sat on, whatever. One of them uses a half-dozen formerly abandoned cars. (A complementary show is at Brooke Alexander, 59 Wooster St.) . . . ¶ A show of prints scanning the political and social views of more than a hundred artists working in this country during the past twenty-five years, among them Miriam Schapiro, Jane Dickson, Romare Bearden, and Hans Haacke. Through April 19. . . . ¶ Large-scale prints of black lemons by Donald Sultan. (A complementary show is at Martina Hamilton, 19 E. 71st St.) . . . **PHOTOGRAPHY:** Prints by Josef Albers. Through April 19. (Open daily, except Wednesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—A *fiftieth-anniversary show of works from the* permanent collections in New York and Venice fills all the galleries. Of special interest are forty-seven paintings by postwar American artists, including Pollock, Rothko, Stella, Lichtenstein, and others, and large-scale sculptures by Nevelson and Calder. Through March 13. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays, 11 to 7:45, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 4:45.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—An exhibit of Richard Artschwager's paintings and sculptures from the *past twenty-five years. Through April 3.* . . . ¶ A Charles Sheeler retrospective offering paintings, drawings, and photographs. Through April 17. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays, 1 to 8, with no admission charge after 6; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 5; Sundays, noon to 6.)

BROOKLYN MUSEUM, Eastern Parkway—A retrospective of sculptures by Nancy Graves. Through Feb. 29. . . . ¶ A display of primitive wood carvings by natives of the South Pacific island New Ireland. . . . ¶ A survey of prints by Alex Katz. Through April 11. (Open daily, except Tuesdays, 10 to 5.)

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY, Central Park W. at 79th St.—Artifacts from Carthage, including seventeen pictorial mosaics. (Open daily. Hours: Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, 10 to 5:45; Wednesdays, 10 to 9; Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge after 5.)

AMERICAN CRAFT MUSEUM, 40 W. 53rd St.—A survey of present-day Scandinavian crafts comprising the work of thirty-five artisans. Through April 24. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays, 10 to 8, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

ASIA SOCIETY, Park Ave. at 70th St.—A show of ancient terra-cotta objects—toys, fertility figures, reliefs—from South and Southeast Asia. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 6; Sundays, noon to 5.)

FRICK COLLECTION, 1 E. 70th St.—All fourteen canvases of Fragonard's "The Progress of Love," which is often considered his greatest work, are on view (as usual), complementing the comprehensive show of the artist's work at the Metropolitan. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays through Saturdays, *10 to 6; Sundays, 1 to 6.)*

JEWISH MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 92nd St.—An exhibit of works by Leonid Pasternak (1862-1945), the Russian Impressionist painter and the father of Boris Pasternak. Genre scenes, landscapes, still-lifes, and portraits (of, for instance, Lenin, Tolstoy, and Einstein). (Open daily except Fridays and Saturdays. Hours: Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, noon to 5; Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge from 5 to 8; Sundays, 11 to 6.)

MORGAN LIBRARY, 29 E. 36th St.—The Drake Manuscript consists of two hundred captioned watercolors of life in the West Indies, thought to be the work of someone on the voyages of Sir Francis Drake. The manuscript is on view along with transparencies of the individual pages. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10:30 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St.—Bird prints in the library's collection, organized chronologically (1550-1900) and selected so as to show a range both of birds and of print techniques. (Open daily, except Sundays and Monday, Feb. 15, from 10 to 5:45.)

MUSIC

(The box-office number for Alice Tully Hall is 362-1911; for Avery Fisher Hall 874-2424; for Carnegie Hall and Weill Recital Hall, at Carnegie Hall, 247-7800; and for Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St., 362-8719. Other box-office numbers are included in the listings.)

OPERA

METROPOLITAN OPERA—Monday, Feb. 15, at 8: "Macbeth," with Shirley Verrett, Justino Díaz, Neil Wilson, and Samuel Ramey; conducted by Kazimierz Kord. . . . ¶ Tuesday, Feb. 16, at 7: "Siegfried," with Hildegard

Behrens, Wolfgang Neumann, Horst Hiestermann, and Donald McIntyre; James Levine. . . . ¶ Wednesday, Feb. 17, at 8: "L'Elisir d'Amore," with Kathleen Battle, Dawn Upshaw, Vinson Cole, Alberto Rinaldi, and Giuseppe Taddei; Ralf Weikert. . . . ¶ Thursday, Feb. 18, at 8: "Otello," with Kiri Te Kanawa, Placido Domingo, and Justino Díaz; James Levine. . . . ¶ Friday, Feb. 19, at 8: "Luisa Miller," with Aprile Millo, Mignon Dunn, Ermanno Mauro, and Giancarlo Pasquetto; Nello Santi. . . . ¶ Saturday, Feb. 20, at 2: "L'Elisir d'Amore," with Kathleen Battle, Dawn Upshaw, Vinson Cole, Alberto Rinaldi, and Giuseppe Taddei; Ralf Weikert. . . . ¶ Saturday, Feb. 20, at 7: "Siegfried," with Hildegard Behrens, Toni Krämer, Horst Hiestermann, and Donald McIntyre; James Levine. . . . ¶ Monday, Feb. 22, at 8: "Khovanshchina," with Elizabeth Knighton, Stefania Toczyska, Wieslaw Ochman, and Denés Gulyás; James Conlon. . . . ¶ Tuesday, Feb. 23, at 8: "Otello," with Kiri Te Kanawa, Placido Domingo, and Justino Díaz; James Levine. . . . ¶ Wednesday, Feb. 24, at 8: "L'Elisir d'Amore," with Kathleen Battle, Dawn Upshaw, Vinson Cole, Alberto Rinaldi, and Giuseppe Taddei; Ralf Weikert. (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000.)

Boston Camerata—Presenting an adaptation of "Tristan and Iseult," in English, put together from medieval manuscripts and music by Joel Cohen, the group's director. The singers will be in costume, and the musicians will play original instruments. (Merkin Concert Hall. Thursday, Feb. 18, at 8.)

Center for Contemporary Opera—Presenting the first of three performances of Benjamin Britten's "Curlew River," accompanied by a small orchestra without a conductor, as the score specifies. Staged by Patricia Heuermann. (St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. Friday, Feb. 19, at 8. For information about tickets, call 874-0245. Through Saturday, Feb. 27.)

Vineyard Opera—Stephen F. Vasta conducting Domenico Cimarosa's 1792 opera "Il Matrimonio Segreto," which the director, Joseph LoSchiavo, has set in Brooklyn in the nineteen-thirties. (Vineyard Theatre, 309 E. 26th St. 683-0696. Friday and Saturday, Feb. 19-20, at 7:30. Through Sunday, March 6.)

Juilliard American Opera Center—Benefit performances of Berlioz's "Beatrice and Benedict," in an English translation by Geoffrey Dunn. Staged by Jack Eddleman, with an orchestra conducted by Jorge Mester. (Juilliard Theatre, 155 W. 65th St. Friday, Feb. 19, at 8; Sunday, Feb. 21, at 3; and Tuesday, Feb. 23, at 8. For information about tickets, call 874-7515.)

Amato Opera Company—Presenting "Rigoletto." (Amato Opera Theatre, 319 Bowery, at 2nd St. 228-8200. Saturday, Feb. 20, at 7:30, and Sunday, Feb. 21, at 2:30. Through Sunday, Feb. 28.)

Opera Orchestra of New York—Eve Queler conducting a concert performance of Giacomo Meyerbeer's "Robert le Diable," with Marilyn Mims and Frances Ginsburg, sopranos; Chris Merritt, tenor; Anthony Laciura, baritone; and Samuel Ramey, bass. (Carnegie Hall. Sunday, Feb. 21, at 7:30.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

New York Philharmonic—Zubin Mehta conducting a Schubert-Poulenc program, with Jessye Norman, soprano. (Avery Fisher Hall. Thursday through Saturday, Feb. 18-20, and Tuesday, Feb. 23, all at 8.)

Philadelphia Orchestra—Riccardo Muti conducting Bruckner's "Te Deum," Mozart's "Ave Verum Corpus," and Verdi's "Four Sacred Pieces," with the Westminster Choir and soloists. (Carnegie Hall. Monday, Feb. 15, at 8.)

Brooklyn Philharmonic—Lukas Foss conducting an all-Mozart program, with Anton Nel, piano; the New York Choral Society; and vocal soloists from Il Piccolo Teatro dell'Opera. (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 1-718 636-4100. Friday and Saturday, Feb. 19-20, at 8, and Sunday, Feb. 21, at 2.)

Jupiter Symphony—Jens Nygaard conducting, with Glenn Dicterow, violin. (Alice Tully Hall. Monday, Feb. 15, at 8.)

Northern Sinfonia of England—Barry Tuckwell conducting and playing the horn. (Carnegie Hall. Thursday, Feb. 18, at 8.)

New York Chamber Symphony—Christopher Kendall conducting an all-Bach program. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 427-4410. Saturday, Feb. 20, at 8.)

Orpheus Chamber Orchestra—Elmar Oliveira, violin, is guest artist with this twenty-six-member group that performs without a conductor. (Carnegie Hall. Saturday, Feb. 20, at 8.)

English Chamber Orchestra—Jeffrey Tate conducting, with Mitsuko Uchida, piano. (Avery Fisher Hall. Wednesday, Feb. 24, at 8.)

New York Pops—Skitch Henderson conducting, with Larry Adler, harmonica. (Carnegie Hall. Friday, Feb. 19, at 8.)

Amor Artis Chorale and Instrumental Ensemble—Johannes Somary directing, among other works, the première of Lawrence Axelrod's "Byōbu." (St. Jean Baptiste Church, Lexington Ave. at 76th St. Friday, Feb. 19, at 8. For information about tickets, call 772-9408.)

RECITALS

Joel Krosnick and Gilbert Kalish—Cello and piano. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. Tuesday, Feb. 16, at 8.)

For the Love of Music—Chamber music. (Merkin Concert Hall. Tuesday, Feb. 16, at 8.)

Donald Joyce—Organ. (Church of St. John the Evangelist, First Ave. at 55th St. Tuesday, Feb. 16, at 8. Admission by contribution.)

Verdehr Trio—Contemporary and classical chamber music. (Alice Tully Hall. Tuesday, Feb. 16, at 8.)

Ivo Pogorelich—Piano. (Carnegie Hall. Tuesday, Feb. 16, at 8. . . . ¶ Avery Fisher Hall. Monday, Feb. 22, at 8.)

Chamber Music at the Y—With Ani Kavafian, violin; Michael Tree, viola; Sharon Robinson, cello; and others. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 427-4410. Tuesday and Wednesday, Feb. 16-17, at 8.)

Goliard Chamber Soloists—In a Beethoven-Weber-Ravel program. (Merkin Concert Hall. Wednesday, Feb. 17, at 8.)

Dimitri Toufexis—Piano. (Alice Tully Hall. Thursday, Feb. 18, at 8.)

Classical Quartet—With Paul O'Dette, classical guitarist. (St. Michael's Church, Amsterdam Ave. at 99th St. Friday, Feb. 19, at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

John Gibbons and Joseph Anton Swensen—Harpsichord and violin. (Weill Recital Hall. Friday, Feb. 19, at 8.)

Guarneri Quartet—Playing a Beethoven-Janáček-Schumann program. (Washington Irving High School, Irving Pl. at 16th St. Saturday, Feb. 20, at 8. For information about tickets, call 586-4680.)

Spoleto Festival Chamber Music at BAM—With Beverly Hoch, soprano; Joseph Anton Swensen, violin; Carter Brey, cello; and Jean-Yves Thibaudet, piano. The third in a series of seven concerts. (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 1-718 636-4100. Saturday, Feb. 20, at 8.)

David Russell—Classical guitarist. (Merkin Concert Hall. Saturday, Feb. 20, at 8.)

Continuum—Celebrating John Cage's seventy-fifth birthday with an all-Cage concert, which the composer will attend. With assisting artists. (Alice Tully Hall. Saturday, Feb. 20, at 8.)

The Colorado Quartet and Stephanie Brown—Chamber music. (New School, 66 W. 12th St. Sunday, Feb. 21, at 2. For information about tickets, call 741-5689.)

New Sounds—Presenting David Cullen, classical guitarist, and Relâche, a nine-person ensemble that performs contemporary experimental music. (Merkin Concert Hall. Sunday, Feb. 21, at 2.)

Anthony Newman—Organ, in the first of three all-Bach concerts. (Church of the Holy Trinity, 316 E. 88th St. Sunday, Feb. 21, at 5. Tickets at the door on the afternoon of the concert.)

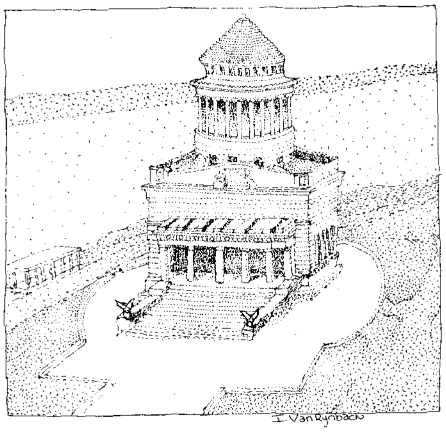
Mario Escudero—Flamenco guitarist; also, two dancers and a singer. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 427-4410. Tuesday, Feb. 23, at 8.)

Alexis Weissenberg—Piano. (Carnegie Hall. Wednesday, Feb. 24, at 8.)

Chelsea Chamber Ensemble—Playing works by Elliott Carter, Lou Harrison, and four young composers. (Weill Recital Hall. Wednesday, Feb. 24, at 8.)

Nina Tichman—Piano, in the second concert of her three-concert series devoted to the complete piano works of Debussy. (Merkin Concert Hall. Wednesday, Feb. 24, at 8.)

Omega Ensemble—Chamber music. (Henry Street Settlement, 466 Grand St. 598-0400. Wednesday, Feb. 24, at 8.)



SPORTS

(The ticket-information number for Madison Square Garden is 563-8300, for the Meadowlands 1-201 935-3900, and for Nassau Coliseum 1-516 587-9222.)

Basketball—At **madison square garden:** Knicks vs. Nets, Monday, Feb. 15, at 7:30. . . . ¶ Knicks vs. Sacramento Kings, Thursday, Feb. 18, at 7:30. . . . ¶ Knicks vs. Milwaukee Bucks, Tuesday, Feb. 23, at 7:30. . . . **byrne meadowlands arena:** Nets vs. Seattle Supersonics, Saturday, Feb. 20, at 7:30. . . . ¶ Nets vs. Portland Trail Blazers, Tuesday, Feb. 23, at 7:30.

Hockey—At **madison square garden:** Rangers vs. Montreal Canadiens, Monday, Feb. 15, at 1:35. . . . ¶ Rangers vs. Calgary Flames, Wednesday, Feb. 17, at 7:35. . . . ¶ Rangers vs. Vancouver Canucks, Sunday, Feb. 21, at 7:35. . . . **nassau coliseum:** Islanders vs. Calgary Flames, Tuesday, Feb. 16, at 8:05. . . . ¶ Islanders vs. Hartford Whalers, Saturday, Feb. 20, at 7:05. . . . ¶ Islanders vs. Vancouver Canucks, Tuesday, Feb. 23, at 8:05. . . . **byrne meadowlands arena:** Devils vs. Washington Capitals, Wednesday, Feb. 17, at 7:45. . . . ¶ Devils vs. Rangers, Friday, Feb. 19, at 7:45. . . . ¶ Devils vs. Boston Bruins, Sunday, Feb. 21, at 1:35. . . . ¶ Devils vs. Winnipeg Jets, Wednesday, Feb. 24, at 7:45.

Racing—At Aqueduct: Daily, except Tuesdays, at 12:30.

Trotting—At **meadowlands:** Weeknights at 7:30. . . . **roosevelt raceway:** Nightly at 7:30; through Tuesday, March 15.

ET ALIA

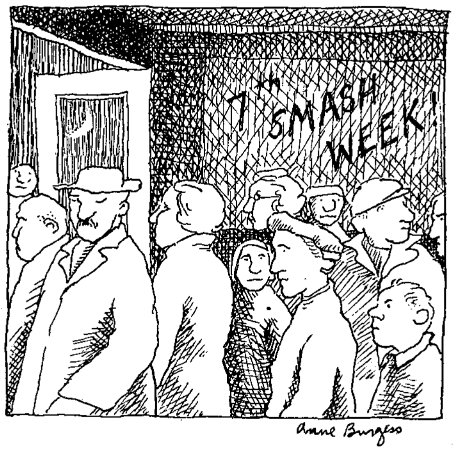
Poetry and Prose Readings—Harold Brodkey reading from a novel in progress. (Donnell Library Center, 20 W. 53rd St. Tuesday, Feb. 16, at 6. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Toby Olson and Russell Banks reading from their own fiction. (Manhattan Theatre Club at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. Monday, Feb. 22, at 8. For information about tickets, call 645-5848.) . . . ¶ Turner Cassity and William Matthews reading from their own poetry. (Donnell Library Center, 20 W. 53rd St. Tuesday, Feb. 23, at 6. No tickets necessary.)

Discussion—Ved Mehta being interviewed on contemporary Indian culture by Robert B. Oxnam. (Asia Society, Park Ave. at 70th St. 517-2742. Tuesday, Feb. 16, at 7.)

House Tour—The former home of Otto Kahn, now the Convent of the Sacred Heart, 1 E. 91st St., will be open to the public on Sunday, Feb. 21. Tickets for the conducted tours, which will last an hour and a half, can be purchased at the door from noon until 4 on the day the house is open.

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE MOVIE HOUSES



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FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN THE "IN BRIEF" SECTION, STARTING ON PAGE 18.

EAST SIDE

Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171; theatre opens in the late afternoon and is closed Mondays.)
"Los Ambiciosos" (1959; directed by Luis Buñuel; a Mexican film, in Spanish), with Gérard Philippe, Maria Félix, and Jean Servais.

Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)
Theatre 1: "Wall Street" (†).
Theatre 2: "Ironweed" (†).
Theatre 3: "Empire of the Sun" (†).

Gramercy, Lexington at 23rd. (475-1660)
"Broadcast News" (†).

Bay Cinema, 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)
"Good Morning, Vietnam" (†).

Loews 34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)
Theatre 1: "Moonstruck" (†).
Theatre 2: "Julia and Julia" (†).
Theatre 3: "She's Having a Baby" (John Hughes), with Kevin Bacon and Elizabeth McGovern.

34th St. East, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
"Action Jackson" (Craig R. Baxley), with Carl Weathers and Craig T. Nelson.

Eastside Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)
"Cop" (†).

Sutton, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)
"Moonstruck" (†).

Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)
"Wall Street" (†).

Plaza, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)
"Travelling North" (Carl Schultz), with Leo McKern and Julia Blake.

Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)
Theatre 1: "The Serpent and the Rainbow" (Wes Craven).
Theatre 2: Through Feb. 18: "Three Men and a Baby" (Leonard Nimoy), with Tom Selleck, Steve Guttenberg, and Ted Danson. From Feb. 19: "Cry Freedom" (†).

Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
Theatre 1: "Five Corners" (Tony Bill), with Jodie Foster.
Theatre 2: "Broadcast News" (†).

D. W. Griffith, 235 E. 59th. (759-4630)
"Shoot to Kill" (Roger Spottiswoode), with Sidney Poitier and Tom Berenger.

Cinema I and II, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022/0774)
Theatre 1: "Au Revoir les Enfants" (†).
Theatre 2: "Good Morning, Vietnam" (†).

Gemini I and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
Theatre 1: "Ironweed" (†).
Theatre 2: "Satisfaction" (Joan Freeman), with Justine Bateman.

Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2
"Empire of the Sun" (†).

Loews New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)
Theatre 1: "Julia and Julia" (†).
Theatre 2: "She's Having a Baby" (John Hughes), with Kevin Bacon and Elizabeth McGovern.

68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)
Through Feb. 18: "The Lonely Passion of Judith Hearne" (†).
From Feb. 19: "A Month in the Country" (Pat O'Connor).

Loews Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
"The Unbearable Lightness of Being" (†).

U. A. East, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
"Satisfaction" (Joan Freeman), with Justine Bateman.

Loews Orpheum I and 2, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (289-4607)
Theatre 1: "Cop" (†).
Theatre 2: "Action Jackson" (Craig R. Baxley), with Carl Weathers and Craig T. Nelson.

86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
Theatre 1: "Moonstruck" (†).
Theatre 2: "School Daze" (Spike Lee).

WEST SIDE

Film Forum I and 2, 57 Watts St. (431-1590; Mondays through Fridays, theatres open in the late afternoon.)
Theatre 1: Through Feb. 16: "Hoxsey: Quacks Who Cure Cancer?" (directed by Ken Ausubel), a documentary. From Feb. 17: "Frida" (1984; Paul Leduc; a Mexican film, in Spanish).
Theatre 2: See listings under "Revival Houses."

Bleecker St. Cinema I and 2, 144 Bleecker St. (674-2560)
Theatre 1: Through Feb. 18: "The Computer Animation Show." From Feb. 19: "Jean de Florette" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Feb. 18: "Jean de Florette" (†). From Feb. 19: "The Computer Animation Show."

8th St. Playhouse, 52 W. 8th. (674-6515; Mondays through Fridays, theatre opens in the late afternoon.)
"The Last Emperor" (†).

Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)
Theatre 1: "Good Morning, Vietnam" (†).
Theatre 2: "Five Corners" (Tony Bill), with Jodie Foster.

Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)
Theatre 1: "Housekeeping" (†).
Theatre 2: "School Daze" (Spike Lee).
Theatre 3: "The Dead" (†).
Theatre 4: "Hope and Glory" (†).

23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)
Theatre 1: "Satisfaction" (Joan Freeman), with Justine Bateman.
Theatre 2: Through Feb. 18: "The Serpent and the Rainbow" (Wes Craven). From Feb. 19: To be announced.
Theatre 3: "Shoot to Kill" (Roger Spottiswoode), with Sidney Poitier and Tom Berenger.

Guild, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)
"She's Having a Baby" (John Hughes), with Kevin Bacon and Elizabeth McGovern.

Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)
"Good Morning, Vietnam" (†).

Festival, 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)
"The Dead" (†).

57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)
"The Last Emperor" (†).

New Carnegie, 225 W. 57th. (582-4582)
Through Feb. 18: "Cry Freedom" (†).
From Feb. 19: See listings for Biograph Cinema, under "Revival Houses."

Carnegie Hall Cinema, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)
"Distant Harmony" (DeWitt Sage), a documentary about Luciano Pavarotti's 1986 tour of China.

Carnegie Screening Room, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (757-2131)
"Ludwig" (1973; Luchino Visconti), with Helmut Berger, Romy Schneider, Trevor Howard, and Silvana Mangano. The 268-minute version.

Paris, 4 W. 58th. (688-2013)
"The Grand Highway" (Jean-Loup Hubert; in French).

Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)
(Separate admissions) "Jean de Florette" (†) and "Manon of the Spring" (†).

Loews Paramount, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)
"She's Having a Baby" (John Hughes), with Kevin Bacon and Elizabeth McGovern.

Lincoln Plaza I, 2, and 3, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)
Theatre 1: "Mélo" (†).
Theatre 2: "My Life as a Dog" (†).
Theatre 3: Through Feb. 18: "Half of Heaven" (†). From Feb. 19: "High Tide" (†).

Cinema Studio I and 2, B'way at 66th. (877-4040)
Theatre 1: "The Family" (1988 †).
Theatre 2: "Sammy and Rosie Get Laid" (†).

Regency, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)
"Shoot to Kill" (Roger Spottiswoode), with Sidney Poitier and Tom Berenger.

Embassy 72nd St. I and 2, B'way at 72nd. (724-6745)
Theatre 1: "Broadcast News" (†).
Theatre 2: "Three Men and a Baby" (Leonard Nimoy), with Tom Selleck, Steve Guttenberg, and Ted Danson.

Loews 84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)
Theatre 1: "Ironweed" (†).
Theatre 2: "Good Morning, Vietnam" (†).
Theatre 3: "Moonstruck" (†).
Theatre 4: "The Last Emperor" (†).
Theatre 5: "A Tiger's Tale" (Peter Douglas), with Ann-Margret, C. Thomas Howell, and Charles Durning.
Theatre 6: "The Dead" (†).

Metro Cinema I and 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)
Theatre 1: Through Feb. 18: "The Serpent and the Rainbow" (Wes Craven). From Feb. 19: "Cry Freedom" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Feb. 18: "Empire of the Sun" (†). From Feb. 19: To be announced.

Columbia Cinema, B'way at 103rd. (866-7500)
"School Daze" (Spike Lee).

Olympia I and II, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)
Theatre 1: "Action Jackson" (Craig R. Baxley), with Carl Weathers and Craig T. Nelson.
Theatre 2: "Satisfaction" (Joan Freeman), with Justine Bateman.

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)
Theatre 1: "Throw Momma from the Train" (directed by Danny DeVito), with Billy Crystal and DeVito.
Theatre 2: "Wall Street" (†).
Theatre 3: "School Daze" (Spike Lee).
Theatre 4: "Satisfaction" (Joan Freeman), with Justine Bateman.
Theatre 5: "Empire of the Sun" (†).
Theatre 6: "For Keeps" (John G. Avildsen), with Molly Ringwald.

Embassy I, B'way at 46th. (757-2408)
"Shoot to Kill" (Roger Spottiswoode), with Sidney Poitier and Tom Berenger.

Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)
Theatre 2: Through Feb. 18: "Eddie Murphy Raw" (Robert Townsend), a concert film. From Feb. 19: "The Untouchables" (†).
Theatre 3: Through Feb. 18: "Julia and Julia" (†). From Feb. 19: "Stranded" (Tex Fuller).
Theatre 4: "Fatal Attraction" (†).

Loews Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)
"Cop" (†).

Movieland, B'way at 47th. (757-8320)
Through Feb. 18: "The Serpent and the Rainbow" (Wes Craven).
From Feb. 19: "Cry Freedom" (†).

National Twin, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)
Theatre 1: "Broadcast News" (†).
Theatre 2: "Action Jackson" (Craig R. Baxley), with Carl Weathers and Craig T. Nelson.

Warner, 7th Ave. between 42nd and 43rd. (764-6760)
"Moonstruck" (†).

REVIVAL HOUSES

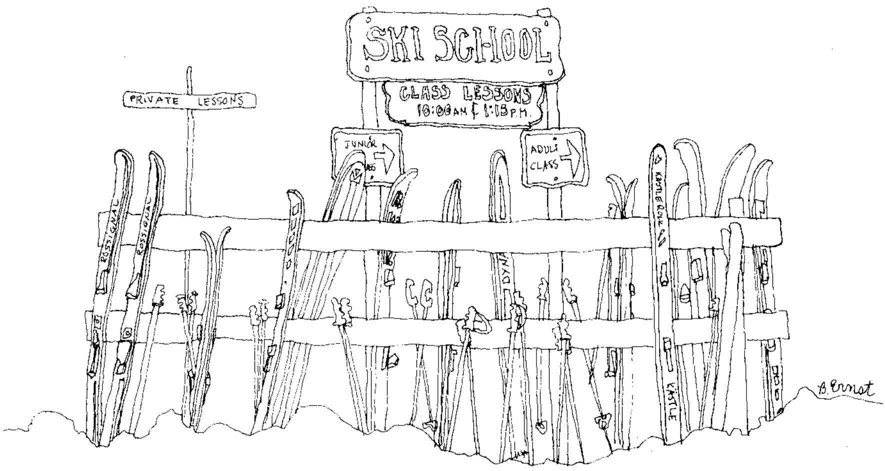
Biograph Cinema (formerly called the New Carnegie), 225 W. 57th. (582-4582)
Feb. 19-20: A program of ten films, five shown each day, set in New York City.
Feb. 21-23: "The Thin Man" (1934; directed by W. S. Van Dyke), with Myrna Loy and William Powell; and "Libeled Lady" (1936; Jack Conway), with Jean Harlow, William Powell, and Myrna Loy. Miss Loy will be present on Sunday, Feb. 21, at 7:30.
From Feb. 24: "Manhattan Melodrama" (1934; W. S. Van Dyke), with Clark Gable, William Powell, and Myrna Loy; and "The Last of Mrs. Cheyney" (1937; Richard Boleslavsky), with Joan Crawford, William Powell, Robert Montgomery, and Frank Morgan.

Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th. (924-3363)
Through Feb. 16: "Thérèse" (1986; Alain Cavalier; in French), with Catherine Mouchet; and "The Gospel According to St. Matthew" (1966; Pier Paolo Pasolini; in Italian), with a cast of nonprofessionals.
Feb. 17-18: "The Whistle Blower" (1987; Simon Langton), with Michael Caine, Nigel Havers, and James Fox; and "The Fourth Protocol" (1987; John Mackenzie), with Michael Caine and Pierce Brosnan.
Feb. 19-20: "Wish You Were Here" (1987; David Leland), with Emily Lloyd; and "Personal Services" (1987; Terry Jones), with Julie Walters.
Feb. 21: "Buffet Froid" (1980; Bertrand Blier; in French), with Gérard Depardieu, Jean Carmet, Bernard Blier, and Geneviève Page; and "Beau Père" (1981; Bertrand Blier; in French), with Patrick Dewaere and Ariel Besse.
Feb. 22-23: "Autumn Sonata" (1978; Ingmar Bergman; in Swedish), with Ingrid Bergman and Liv Ullmann; and "Persona" (1967; Ingmar Bergman; in Swedish), with Bibi Andersson and Liv Ullmann.
From Feb. 24: "Tough Guys Don't Dance" (†); and "Prizzi's Honor" (1985; John Huston), with Jack Nicholson, Kathleen Turner, William Hickey, Anjelica Huston, and John Randolph.

Film Forum 2, 57 Watts St. (431-1590; Mondays through Fridays, theatre opens in the late afternoon.)
Through Feb. 18: "The Boy Friend" (1971; Ken Russell), with Twiggy and Christopher Gable.
Feb. 19-21: "Pull My Daisy" (1960); "The Beat Generation" (1959; Charles Haas), with Steve Cochran, Mamie Van Doren, Ray Danton, and Fay Spain; and "The Subterraneans" (1960; Ranald MacDougall), with Leslie Caron, George Peppard, and Janice Rule.
Feb. 22: "A Bucket of Blood" (1959; Roger Corman), with Dick Miller; "Color Me Blood Red" (1965; Herschell Gordon Lewis); and "To L.A. . . . With Lust" (1961; Vernon Zimmerman).
Feb. 23: "Guns of the Trees" (1961; Jonas Mekas); and "Queen of Sheba Meets Atom Man" (1963; Ron Rice).
Feb. 24: "Expresso Bongo" (†); and "Funny Face" (1957; Stanley Donen), with Audrey Hepburn, Fred Astaire, and Kay Thompson.

Thalia SoHo, 15 Vandam St. (675-0498)
Feb. 15: "Shock Corridor" (1963; Samuel Fuller), with Constance Towers, Peter Breck, and James Best; and "The Baron of Arizona" (1950; Samuel Fuller), with Vincent Price and Ellen Drew.
Feb. 16: "Dim Sum: A Little Bit of Heart" (1985; Wayne Wang); and "China on the March" (1958; Moan Bhavnani), a documentary.
Feb. 17: "The George Raft Story" (1962; Joseph M. Newman), with Ray Danton, Julie London, and Jayne Mansfield; and "Pulp" (1973; Mike Hodges), with Michael Caine and Mickey Rooney.
Feb. 18: "Women in Love" (1970; Ken Russell), with Alan Bates, Oliver Reed, Glenda Jackson, and Jennie Linden; and "The Music Lovers" (1971; Ken Russell), with Richard Chamberlain and Glenda Jackson.
Feb. 19-20: "Open City" (1945; Roberto Rossellini; in Italian), with Anna Magnani; and "Women Without Names" (1951; Geza Radvanyl; in four languages), with Valentina Cortese and Simone Simon.
Feb. 21: "The Canterbury Tales" (1972; Pier Paolo Pasolini; in Italian), with Hugh Griffith, Alan Webb, and Jenny Runacre; and "Medea" (1971; Pier Paolo Pasolini; in Italian), with Maria Callas.
Feb. 22: "Fixed Bayonets" (1951; Samuel Fuller), with Richard Basehart and Gene Evans; and "The Big Red One" (1980; Samuel Fuller), with Lee Marvin and Mark Hamill.
Feb. 23: "Burn!" (1970; Gillo Pontecorvo), with Marlon Brando; and "Kapo" (1959; Gillo Pontecorvo), with Susan Strasberg.
Feb. 24: "The Bad and the Beautiful" (1953; Vincente Minnelli), with Lana Turner, Kirk Douglas, Dick Powell, and Gloria Grahame; and "Two Weeks in Another Town" (1962; Vincente Minnelli), with Kirk Douglas, Edward G. Robinson, and Cyd Charisse.

Theatre 80 St. Marks, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)
Feb. 15: "Lost Horizon" (1937; Frank Capra), with Ronald Colman, Margo, Sam Jaffe, and Edward Everett Horton; and "The Bitter Tea of General Yen" (1933; Frank Capra), with Barbara Stanwyck, Nils Asther, Gavin Gordon, and Walter Connolly.
Feb. 16: "Vampyr" (1932; Carl Dreyer; in German), with Julian West, Henriette Gérard, Rena Mandel, and Sybille Schmitz; and "Day of Wrath" (1943; Carl Dreyer; in Danish).
Feb. 17: "Little Women" (1933; George Cukor), with Katharine Hepburn, Joan Bennett, Edna May Oliver, Frances Dee, and Spring Byington; and "Pride and Prejudice" (1940; Robert Z. Leonard), with Greer Garson, Laurence Olivier, and Edna May Oliver.
Feb. 18: "Summertime" (1955; David Lean), with Katharine Hepburn, Rossano Brazzi, Isa Miranda, and Darren McGavin; and "Three Coins in the Fountain" (1954; Jean Negulesco), with Clifton Webb, Dorothy McGuire, Jean Peters, and Louis Jourdan.
Feb. 19-20: "Mr. Skeffington" (1944; Vincent Sherman), with Bette Davis and Claude Rains; and "In This Our Life"



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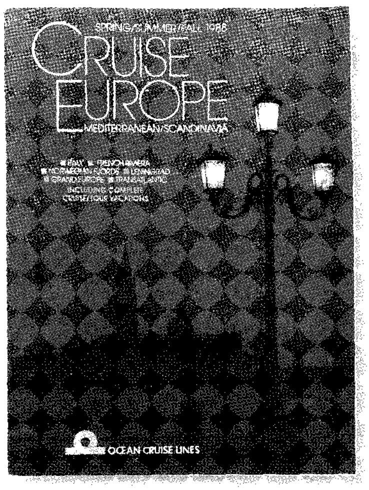

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(1942; John Huston), with Bette Davis, Olivia de Havilland, George Brent, and Dennis Morgan.

Feb. 21: "Ninotchka" (1939; Ernst Lubitsch), with Greta Garbo, Melvyn Douglas, and Sig Rumann; and "Grand Hotel" (1932; Edmund Goulding), with Greta Garbo, John Barrymore, Joan Crawford, and Wallace Beery.

Feb. 22: "Ivan the Terrible, Parts I and II" (1944-46; Sergei Eisenstein; in Russian), with Nikolai Cherkassov.

Feb. 23: "The Fugitive Kind" (1960; Sidney Lumet), with Marlon Brando, Anna Magnani, and Joanne Woodward; and "One-Eyed Jacks" (1961; Marlon Brando), with Brando, Karl Malden, and Katy Jurado.

Feb. 24: "The Lodger" (1944; John Brahm), with Merle Oberon, Laird Cregar, George Sanders, and Cedric Hardwicke; and "Hangover Square" (1945; John Brahm), with Laird Cregar and Linda Darnell.

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9490; a limited number of tickets are available to those applying for them in person at the museum after 11 on the day of the showing.)

THEATRE I: Feb. 15 at 2: "L'Arte di Arrangiarsi" (1955; directed by Luigi Zampa; in Italian, with English subtitles), with Alberto Sordi. . . . ¶ Feb. 15 at 5: "Le Amiche" (1955; Michelangelo Antonioni; in Italian, with English subtitles), with Eleonora Rossi-Drago, Valentina Cortese, and Gabriele Ferzetti. . . . ¶ Feb. 16 at 2:30: "Gli Innamorati" (1956; Mauro Bolognini; in Italian, with English subtitles), with Franco Interlenghi, Antonella Lualdi, and Nino Manfredi. . . . ¶ Feb. 16 at 6: "White Nights" (1957; Luchino Visconti; in Italian, with English subtitles), with Marcello Mastroianni, Maria Schell, and Jean Marais. . . . ¶ Feb. 18 at 2:30: "La Sfida" (1958; Francesco Rosi; in Italian, with English subtitles), with José Suarez and Rosanna Schiaffino. . . . ¶ Feb. 18 at 6: "Gli Innamorati." . . . ¶ Feb. 19 at 2:30: "I Cento Cavalieri" (1964; Vittorio Cottafavi; in Italian, with English subtitles), with Mark Damon and Antonella Lualdi. . . . ¶ Feb. 19 at 6: "Buone Notizie" (1979; Elio Petri), with Giancarlo Giannini, Angela Molina, and Aurore Clement. . . . ¶ Feb. 20 at 2: "Le Avventure di Pinocchio" (1972; Luigi Comencini; in Italian, with English subtitles), with Nino Manfredi, Gina Lollobrigida, and Vittorio De Sica. . . . ¶ Feb. 20 at 5: "White Nights." . . . ¶ Feb. 21 at 2: "I Cento Cavalieri." . . . ¶ Feb. 21 at 5: "La Sfida." . . . ¶ Feb. 22 at 2:30: "Le Avventure di Pinocchio." . . . ¶ Feb. 22 at 6: "Il Deserto dei Tartari" (1976; Valerio Zurlini; in Italian, with English subtitles), with Vittorio Gassman, Giuliano Gemma, Philippe Noiret, and Max von Sydow. . . . ¶ Feb. 23 at 2:30: "Buone Notizie." . . . ¶ Feb. 23 at 6: "Vogliamo i Colonelli" (1973; Mario Monicelli; in Italian, with English subtitles), with Ugo Tognazzi, François Périer, and Claude Dauphin.

THEATRE 2: Feb. 15 at 2:30 and 5:30: "Applause" (1929; Rouben Mamoulian), with Helen Morgan, Joan Peers, and Fuller Mellish, Jr. . . . ¶ Feb. 16 at 3 and 6:30: "Shoot the Piano Player" (1960; François Truffaut; in French, with English subtitles), with Charles Aznavour, Marie Dubois, and Nicole Berger. . . . ¶ Feb. 18 at 3 and 7: "Andrea Doria: The Final Chapter" (1981; Peter Gimbel and Elga Andersen-Gimbel). Elga Andersen-Gimbel will be present. . . . ¶ Feb. 19 at 3 and 6:30: "The 39 Steps" (1935; Alfred Hitchcock), with Madeleine Carroll and Robert Donat. . . . ¶ Feb. 20 at 2:30 and 6:30: "Angi Vera" (1979; Pál Gábor; in Hungarian, with English subtitles), with Veronika Papp. . . . ¶ Feb. 21 at 2:30 and 5:30: "The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance" (1962; John Ford), with Lee Marvin, James Stewart, and John Wayne.

Whitney Museum, Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-0537)—A retrospective of the films of St. Clair Bourne, who will be present on Feb. 23 at 5:45. The schedule of performances is complicated; our best advice is to phone the museum for film and time schedules. Closed Mondays.

Japan Society, 333 E. 47th St. (752-3015)—A retrospective of the films of Keisuke Kinoshita, all in Japanese, with English subtitles. Feb. 16 at 6:30: "Morning for the Osone Family" (1946), with Haruko Sugimura; and "The Ballad of Narayama" (1958), with Kinuyo Tanaka. . . . ¶ Feb. 19 at 6:30: "Outcast" (1948), with Ryo Ikebe; and "Carmen Comes Home" (1951), with Hideko Takamine. . . . ¶ Feb. 23 at 6:30: "Carmen's Pure Love" (1952), with Hideko Takamine; and "A Japanese Tragedy" (1953), with Yuko Mochizuki.

Museum of Broadcasting, 1 E. 53rd St. (752-7684)—Through March 1: "New York World Television Festival," a program of twenty-seven international productions that have won awards during the past year. . . . ¶ "WNET Thirteen: 25 Years on the Air," over a hundred hours of news, public affairs, documentary, music, dance, theatre, nature, science, and children's programming. The first section, featuring news, public affairs, and documentaries, is on view through March 19. The schedules of performances are complicated; our best advice is to phone the museum for titles, schedules, and ticket information. Closed Sundays and Mondays.

Collective for Living Cinema, 41 White St. (925-2111)—Feb. 15 at 8: "Street of Shame" (1956; Kenji Mizoguchi; in Japanese, with English subtitles). . . . ¶ Feb. 16 at 8: "The Exile" (1947; Max Ophuls), with Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., and Maria Montez. . . . ¶ Feb. 17 at 8: "All That Heaven Allows" (1955; Douglas Sirk), with Jane Wyman and Rock Hudson; and "The Inauguration of the Pleasure Dome" (1954; Kenneth Anger), with Anger, Curtis Harrington, Anaïs Nin, and Samson de Brier. . . . ¶ Feb. 18-20, showings at 8: Films by Mike and George Kuchar. . . . ¶ Feb. 21 at 8: A program of films by the Filipino filmmaker Raymond Red. . . . ¶ Feb. 22 at 8: "The Man Who Left His Will on Film" (1970; Nagisa Oshima; in Japanese, with English subtitles). . . . ¶ Feb. 23 at 8: "Caught" (1949; Max Ophuls), with James Mason, Barbara Bel Geddes, and Robert Ryan. . . . ¶ Feb. 24 at 8: "Shockproof" (1949; Douglas Sirk), with Cornel Wilde; and "Fireworks" (1947; Kenneth Anger).

IN BRIEF

SEE ABOVE FOR THEATRE ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS.
IF A MOVIE HAS BEEN REVIEWED IN "THE CURRENT CINEMA" DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE DATE OF ITS REVIEW IS GIVEN.

(Unsigned notes are by Pauline Kael; others are by Terrence Rafferty.)

Au Revoir les Enfants—Directed by Louis Malle. In French. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Cinema I.)

Broadcast News—The writer-producer-director James L. Brooks puts us inside the world of a network's Washington bureau and sets up an adversarial relationship between the reddish-blond charmer Tom (William Hurt), who represents TV's corruption of the news into entertainment, and dark, broody Aaron (Albert Brooks), a near-genius newsman who, on the surface, at least, represents substance and integrity. The heroine, Jane (Holly Hunter), is a producer, and she and Aaron are supposed to be high-principled professionals, as well as close friends. The satirical, romantic-comedy dilemma is that Jane finds herself falling in love with Tom, who incarnates everything that she despises. Basically all the picture is saying is that beautiful, assured people have an edge over the rest of us, no matter how high our I.Q.s are. And it lacks any filmmaking excitement. With all the surface authenticity Jim Brooks gives us, he himself represents the corruption of movies into TV. (Reviewed in our issue of 1/11/88.) (Gramercy, Coronet, Embassy 72nd St., and National Twin.)

Cop—James Woods plays one of those boringly abrasive "maverick" cops—he's supposed to be so passionately disgusted by crime and injustice that he can't, you know, go by the book. In effect, this means that he abuses everyone he interrogates, says "Bingo" every time he makes a discovery, and kills a lot more people than the average policeman. This is not a role that one dreams of seeing James Woods in. It's his worst performance: he brings the wrong kind of energy to the character, and too much of it. He makes his crusading cop seem smug, and almost gleefully sadistic, and his portrayal gives the movie ugly overtones that the director, James B. Harris, either isn't aware of or isn't skillful enough to control. But even without the misconceived central performance the movie would be junk—the serial-killer plot, taken from a novel by James Ellroy, makes no sense at all. Lesley Ann Warren appears as, of all things, a feminist poet; her eyes bulge about as much as Woods' do, though more attractively and to greater comic effect. Also with Charles Durning and Charles Haid. Co-produced by Woods and Harris.—T.R. (Eastside Cinema, Loews Orpheum, and Loews Astor Plaza.)

Cry Freedom—Attempting to use the martyrdom of young Stephen Biko (Denzel Washington), the leader of the Black Consciousness Movement, to arouse the audience to the tragic injustice of apartheid, the producer-director Richard Attenborough feels justified in using events out of their historical sequence, compressing them, and distorting freely. The epic collapses before midpoint when Biko is badly beaten while in the custody of the Security Police and dies, in September, 1977, of brain injuries. The story then shifts to the efforts of Donald Woods (Kevin Kline), a white newspaper editor, to escape with his wife and five children, taking with him the manuscript of a book he has written about his friend Biko. And we're painfully aware that despite the movie's hopes of raising the white audience's consciousness, we whites are assumed to need a white man to identify with. Screenplay by John Briley, based on Woods' books "Biko" and "Asking for Trouble." Shot mostly in Zimbabwe; 2 hours and 37 minutes. (11/30/87) (New Carnegie; through Feb. 18. . . . ¶ Manhattan Twin, Metro Cinema, and Movieland; starting Feb. 19.)

The Dead—Working in a mood of tranquil exuberance, the eighty-year-old John Huston made a great warm, funny movie out of the great story that James Joyce wrote at twenty-five. Huston never before blended his actors so intuitively, so musically. The party that the Morkan sisters and their fortyish niece give in their Dublin town house on January 6, 1904, the Feast of the Epiphany, suggests the Chekhov production of your dreams, or maybe one of Satyajit Ray's triumphs. The cast is glorious: Donal McCann is Gabriel; Anjelica Huston is Gabriel's wife, Gretta; Donal Donnelly is Freddy; Marie Kean is Freddy's mother; Cathleen Delany is Aunt Julia; Helena Carroll is Aunt Kate; Ingrid Craigie is Mary Jane; Dan O'Herlihy is the Protestant Mr. Browne; and Frank Patterson is the tenor who sings "The Lass of Aughrim." Screenplay by Tony Huston; cinematography by Fred Murphy; score by Alex North. (12/14/87) (Quad Cinema, Festival, and Loews 84th Street Sixplex.)

Empire of the Sun—At the outset, this Steven Spielberg epic is so big and majestic you want to laugh in pleasure, and it stays that way for about forty-five minutes—Spielberg takes over Shanghai, and makes it his city. But then, first in brief patches and then in longer ones, his directing goes terribly wrong. The story, taken from J. G. Ballard's autobiographical novel, is set at the outbreak of the Second World War, and it's about Jim (Christian Bale), an eleven-year-old British schoolboy, who is separated from his parents when the Japanese Army invades the city, on December 8, 1941, and how he changes in order to survive three years of starving in a prison camp. It isn't told straightforwardly, though. Spielberg throws himself into bravura passages, lingers over them trying to give them a poetic obsessiveness, and loses his grasp of the narrative. For the sake of emotion—to have something to say, to give the picture some meaning—he pumps it full of false emotion. (That's what his poetry is.) John Williams' editorializing music swells and swooshes, trying to make you feel that something religious is going on. Christian Bale is a fine performer, directed superlatively; also with John Malkovich, Miranda Richardson, Nigel Havers, and Joe Pantoliano.

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

The adaptation is credited to Tom Stoppard (it was also worked on by Menno Meyjes); the cinematography is by Allen Daviau. Spielberg had permission to shoot in Shanghai for only three weeks; the settings were matched up and constructed in Spain and London. 2 hours and 33 minutes. (12/28/87) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Beekman, and Criterion Center. . . . ¶ Metro Cinema; through Feb. 18.)

Expresso Bongo (1959)—This very funny, very distinctive musical satire accepts its targets with good-natured incredulity. An English production, it opens with the camera roving around the teen-age haunts and entertainment palaces of London. The film is written in a brash theatrical idiom with a Yiddish flavor; it's like the language in "Sweet Smell of Success," but it's used much more affectionately. In "A Kid for Two Farthings" the writer Wolf Mankowitz performed the remarkable feat of turning a narcissistic weight lifter into a fairy-tale character; here he lifts a segment of the modern world to the level of fantasy by stylizing theatrical sentimentality and vulgarity. In the role of a glib Soho talent agent who's scrounging for a living, Laurence Harvey gives perhaps his most likable performance; he has some very deft bits—this agent has the amusing theatrical habit of adapting his speech to the accents of the people he talks to. He owns fifty per cent of a young, bewildered rock 'n' roll singer, played by Cliff Richard. The singer is childlike and withdrawn and opportunistic; he tells his juvenile fans that he is a "deeply religious boy," and he sings a song about mom and home called "The Shrine on the Second Floor." With Sylvia Syms, Yolande Donlon, Hermione Baddeley, Ambrosine Philpotts, Avis Bunnage, Kenneth Griffith, Susan Hampshire, Eric Pohlmann, Wilfrid Lawson, and Gilbert Harding as himself, and Meier Tzelniker, re-creating his stage role as the record manufacturer, who describes his product in a song called "Nausea." Mankowitz first wrote the material as a short story, then as a musical play, and then as a film. Val Guest directed. With choreography by Kenneth MacMillan. (Film Forum 2; Feb. 24.)

The Family—Ettore Scola's chronicle of a Roman middle-class family from 1906 to 1986 uses formal gimmicks to disguise its lack of substance. The film's nine episodes take place at precise ten-year intervals; both the first episode and the last involve the taking of a group photograph; and all the action is set in the family's spacious apartment. Scola and his co-scenarists (Ruggero Maccari and Furio Scarpelli) work the dull middle ground of human experience—amazingly little happens to any of this family's dozens of members—but the story's uneventfulness doesn't really mean anything, either. The filmmakers seem to be aiming for the blandest kind of universality. If we didn't know better, we'd swear that this fussy, empty movie had been made to demonstrate the decadence of bourgeois filmmaking, European style. With Vittorio Gassman, Fanny Ardant, Stefania Sandrelli, Andrea Occhipinti, Jo Ciampa, and, in a cameo, Philippe Noiret. In Italian.—T.R. (Cinema Studio.)

Fatal Attraction—A primer on the bad things that can happen if a man cheats on his wife. There's sometimes a fine line between sexiness and craziness, and the hero (Michael Douglas), a Manhattan corporate lawyer—a settled married man—isn't hip enough to catch the danger signals when he lets a woman book editor (Glenn Close) talk him into going with her to her loft. Once this woman begins behaving as if she had a right to a share in the lawyer's life, she becomes the dreaded lunatic of horror movies. But with a difference: she parrots the aggressively angry, self-righteous statements that have become commonplaces of feminist fiction, and they're so inappropriate to the circumstances that they're the proof she's loco. They're also the director Adrian Lyne's and the screenwriter James Dearden's hostile version of feminism. Basically, this is a gross-out slasher movie in a glossy format, and it enforces conventional morality (in the era of AIDS) by piling fear on paranoiac fear. With Anne Archer as the beautiful homebody wife, Ellen Hamilton Latzen as the bright little daugh-

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ter, and Stuart Pankin as the clowning pal. Tip-top editing by Michael Kahn and Peter E. Berger. (10/19/87) (Embassy.)

Good Morning, Vietnam—It sounded like a first-rate idea: Robin Williams doing his manic free-association comedy as a disk jockey, Adrian Cronauer, on Armed Forces Radio in Saigon in 1965. But the picture makes the character out to be a vulnerable, compassionate, respectful-of-the-Vietnamese wonderful guy, and the director, Barry Levinson, has a numbing sense of rhythm. Williams' riffs are chopped short, and the film keeps cutting to soldiers breaking up over his spiel before it's out of his mouth. There is an Adrian Cronauer, and the movie is very loosely based on his exploits, but the way the story line (from the script by Mitch Markowitz) has been directed it's a clumsier version of the plots of fifties musicals. (1/11/88) (Bay Cinema, Cinema II, Art Greenwich Twin, Ziegfeld, and Loews 84th Street Sixplex.)

Half of Heaven—Manuel Gutiérrez Aragón's film, set in Franco's Spain in the years following the Second World War, has an odd, elusive tone. It tells the story of Rosa (Angela Molina), a smart, energetic countrywoman who, after a series of small adventures, winds up as the owner of a fancy restaurant in Madrid. There are elements of soap opera in the way the narrative moves—from struggle to heartbreak to triumph—mixed with a fantastic, magic-realist strain. Both Rosa's grandmother and her own daughter have witchlike powers, which they use in very ambiguous ways. Rosa herself is spectacularly down-to-earth, and often doesn't know what to make of the supernatural interventions in the determinedly normal course of her life. Gutiérrez Aragón directs in an uninsistent, one-thing-after-another style, and despite the occasional dead patch the movie is generally absorbing and enjoyable. Molina is lovely and skillful, and Fernando Fernán-Gómez, as a drunken middle-aged government official who guides Rosa in the more earthbound aspects of her life in Madrid, gives a richly funny performance. Screenplay by the director and Luis Megino. In Spanish.—T.R. (Lincoln Plaza; through Feb. 18.)

High Tide—With Judy Davis, directed by Gillian Armstrong. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Lincoln Plaza; starting Feb. 19.)

Hope and Glory—A great comedy about the blitz. In this autobiographical film, the writer-director John Boorman has had the inspiration to desentimentalize wartime England and show us the Second World War the way he saw it as an eight-year-old—as a party that kept going day after day, night after night. Boorman lets his characters say the previously unsayable. Bored with crouching indoors during the nightly raids by the Luftwaffe, the dimply blond fifteen-year-old Dawn (Sammi Davis), the eldest of the three Rohan children, runs outside, watches the firefighters at work on a blazing house, and dances in the Rohans' postage-stamp-size front garden. "It's lovely!" she calls out. The large cast includes Sebastian Rice Edwards as the eight-year-old Bill, Geraldine Muir as his little sister, Sarah Miles as his mother, David Hayman as his father, Ian Bannen as his grandfather, and Susan Wooldridge, Derrick O'Connor, and Jean-Marc Barr as the Canadian jokester. (10/5/87) (Quad Cinema.)

Housekeeping—Marilynne Robinson's novel about two orphaned sisters and the nature-loving, itinerant aunt who arrives to keep house for them has a wonderful representation of a psychological state: Aunt Sylvie seems to spend her life falling into a non-verbal world—staring at nothingness. But the novel also has a bag-lady mystique—a poetic view of vagrancy. The idea seems to be that if you give up conventional values and material things you can wander the earth and lead a magical life. Bill Forsyth, who adapted and directed the movie version, doesn't make the material his own; he doesn't find his own rhythms. The early scenes are whimsical and promising, but the later ones have a clammy, awkward lyricism. Since Sylvie is always remote and has to wake up out of her basic trance to respond to a situation, Christine Lahti, who plays the part, can't call on her full resourcefulness. (12/14/87) (Quad Cinema.)

Ironweed—The director, Hector Babenco, treats William Kennedy's Albany novel, set in 1938, as a joyless classic; the movie has no momentum—the running time (two hours and twenty-four minutes) is like a death sentence. As Francis Phelan, the alcoholic hobo hero who is torn by guilt over the family he deserted twenty-two years ago and sees the phantoms of men he has done violence to, Jack Nicholson seems to be in a slow-motion dream. The only moments of reprieve from all the sombre artistry come when Meryl Streep, who is Francis's hobo crony Helen, sings "He's Me Pal" in the all-out, sentimental-Irish manner of a balladeer of a decade or two earlier; it's a spectacular re-creation of the old technique for "selling a song." Tom Waits, Hy Anzell, and Margaret Whitton provide brief changes of mood and emotion. The screenplay is by Kennedy. (1/11/88) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Gemini, and Loews 84th Street Sixplex.)

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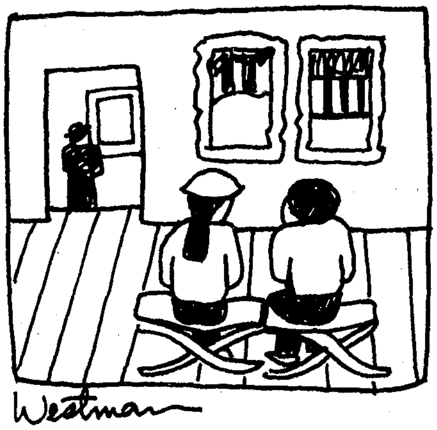
Jean de Florette—With Yves Montand, Gérard Depardieu, Elisabeth Depardieu, and Daniel Auteuil; directed by Claude Berri. In French. (7/13/87) (Bleecker St. Cinema, and Cinema 3.)

Julia and Julia—Kathleen Turner plays Julia, who seems to have two lives: one in which she lives alone, having been widowed on her wedding day six years earlier, and another in which her husband (Gabriel Byrne) is still alive and she's the mother of a little boy. Peter Del Monte's film tries to keep us guessing about which of Julia's lives is fantasy and which is reality, but it's a tedious game. The heroine's psychology is trivial, and Del Monte's style is glumly arty, so we can't even enjoy the film as a fancy, superficial entertainment. For all the director's atmospheric borrowings from Antonioni ("Identification of a Woman") and Nicolas Roeg ("Don't Look Now"), "Julia and Julia" finally seems like no more than a glossy version of a Dario Argento psycho-slasher movie. (Near the end, a murder is committed with what must be the largest pair of scissors in Europe.) The film was shot, by Giuseppe Rotunno, on high-definition video, and the process looks better than you'd expect—though there's no particular reason to have used it. The real mystery of the film is how, and why, Kathleen Turner has been made to look like Ann-Margret. Also with Sting and Gabriele Ferzetti.—T.R. (Loews 34th Street Showplace, and Loews New York Twin. . . . ¶ Embassy; through Feb. 18.)

The Last Emperor—Bernardo Bertolucci tells the story of Pu Yi, who was not quite three when, in 1908, he was set on the Dragon Throne in Peking's Forbidden City and became the titular ruler of a third of the people on earth. After being deposed and then enthroned again in Japanese-occupied Manchuria, he was in Soviet custody for five years, and then spent ten years being "reëducated" in a Chinese war-criminals prison. The movie doesn't have the juicy absurdity that seems to pour right out of the historical story. And it suppresses the drama. But it has pictorial grace and a dull fascination. Bertolucci presents Pu Yi (John Lone) as a man without will or backbone who lives his life as spectacle—who watches his life go by. And so we're given a historical pageant without a protagonist. There's an idea here, but it's a dippy idea—it results in a passive movie. With Joan Chen and Peter O'Toole. Cinematography by Vittorio Storaro; the film shows the palaces and courtyards of the two-hundred-and-fifty-acre Forbidden City. 2 hours and 46 minutes. (11/30/87) (8th St. Playhouse, 57th St. Playhouse, and Loews 84th Street Sixplex.)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The Lonely Passion of Judith Hearne—A spinster in spite of her sensual nature, Judy Hearne, who lives in Dublin, is all pretension. Everybody sees through her, and she knows it, but she can't get rid of her own mealymouthed phoniness: it's ingrained in her. Maggie Smith, who plays the part, lets you read every shade of feeling in Judy's face; she makes you feel the ghastliness of knowing you're a figure of fun. Taken from Brian Moore's 1955 novel (a work of surpassing empathy written when he was only twenty-seven), the movie, directed by Jack Clayton, is a phenomenal piece of work. It's about Judy's misunderstanding the attentions of her landlady's brother (Bob Hoskins) and thinking herself to be in the midst of a romance; it's about her isolation, her secret drinking, and her rage against the Church for her wasted life. Maggie Smith and Wendy Hiller (who plays Judy's tyrannical aunt) are magnificent together, and Ian McNeice, who plays the landlady's son, gives the film a baroque touch that helps offset the shallow, virtuous ending. The adaptation is by Peter Nelson. (12/28/87) (68th St. Playhouse; through Feb. 18.)

Manon of the Spring—Will Fate settle the hash of César Soubeyran (Yves Montand) and his cretinous nephew, Ugolin (Daniel Auteuil), the Provençal farmers whose treachery caused the death of gentle, hunchbacked Jean de Florette? Of course it will. To keep us awake while we're waiting for the inevitable, this concluding half of Claude Berri's adaptation of the Marcel Pagnol novel "The Water of the Hills" serves up pretty much the same menu as "Jean de Florette" (see above): changing seasons (exquisitely shot by Bruno Nuytten), Montand looking sly, Auteuil gaping, wiry peasants and fat shopkeepers shouting at each other over bottles of vin ordinaire. With Emmanuelle Béart. Screenplay by Berri and Gérard Brach, with a credit for original dialogue by Pagnol. In French. —T.R. (Cinema 3.)

Mélo—Alain Resnais's latest film is based on an old-fashioned drama of infidelity written in the nineteen-twenties by Henry Bernstein. The play, conventional and well constructed, is a pristine example of the kind of popular art that's doomed to become "dated." This must have been the quality that attracted Resnais to such unlikely material; in any case, he calls attention to the story's outmoded theatricality by treating it with ostentatious respect. The performance is solemn, elegant, and stiff, and the self-conscious style has the effect of making the characters seem weirdly unmoored—as if they were adrift in some featureless space between the twenties and the eighties, between theatre and "real life," and so on. (Since the material doesn't really play, we have plenty of time to discover—or invent—ways to link this corny melodrama to earlier Resnais works like "Hiroshima, Mon Amour," "Last Year at Marienbad," and "Providence.") The director's exaggerated formality, his scrupulous technique, and his extreme reserve occasionally succeed in giving the characters the odd poignance that puppets sometimes have. Even at its best, though, "Mélo" isn't much more than a classy dinner-theatre production—without the dinner. With Sabine Azéma, André Dussollier, Pierre Arditi, and Fanny Ardant—the same quartet of actors who have appeared in each of Resnais's last three films. (Bernstein's play has been filmed several times, in different languages: the English version, in 1937, was called "Dreaming Lips," and starred Elisabeth Bergner and Raymond Massey.) In French—T.R. (Lincoln Plaza.)

Moonstruck—A rose-tinted black comedy, with its own special lushness. Cher is devastatingly funny and sinuous and beautiful as a widowed bookkeeper who lives with her Italian-American family in a big old brownstone in Brooklyn. When the bookkeeper and her fiancé's brother, a baker (Nicolas Cage), start lusting for one another, a fairy-tale full moon lights up the movie. And when you see that the whole cast of family members are involved in libidinal confusions the opera-buffa structure can make you feel close to deliriously happy. Cage is a wonderful romantic clown: he can look stupefied while he smolders. And the director, Norman Jewison, working from John Patrick Shanley's script, stylizes the ethnic performances given by the husky-voiced Olympia Dukakis, the great, leering Julie Bovasso, Vincent Gardenia, Danny Aiello, John Mahoney, and Anita Gillette. The picture is slender, but it's an original: its mockery is a giddy homage to our desire for grand passion. (1/25/88) (Loews 34th Street Showplace, Sutton, 86th Street East Twin, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Warner.)

My Life as a Dog—Lasse Hallström's film is a gentle, episodic narrative of a twelve-year-old boy (Anton Glanzelius) growing up in nineteen-fifties Sweden. Ingemar, a lively but sensitive kid, gets passed around from household to household when his mother becomes seriously ill. At its best, the movie is very shrewd about the ways children protect themselves from disorienting, and even traumatic, experiences. Hallström's naïveté as a director gives many of the dramatic scenes a touching straightforwardness. But that same quality sabotages the comic passages with a tone of heavy, self-satisfied whimsy. With Tomas von Brömssen, Anki Liden, Ingmari Carlsson, and Melinda Kinnaman. Screenplay by Hallström, Reidar Jönsson, Brasse Brännstrom, and Per Berglund, from Jönsson's novel. In Swedish.—T.R. (Lincoln Plaza.)

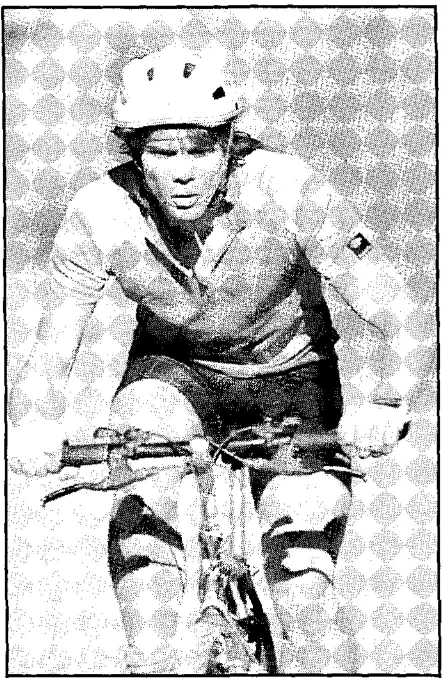
Sammy and Rosie Get Laid—This second film by the director Stephen Frears and the writer Hanif Kureishi, who made "My Beautiful Laundrette," has so much going on that it keeps losing track of what it's about. Sammy (Ayub Khan Din) and Rosie (Frances Barber) and their friends are Third World bohemians who live in a decaying, racially mixed part of London. Sammy's father, Rafi (Shashi Kapoor), who was a minister in the repressive government of Pakistan and is fleeing threats on his life, thinks he can return to the courteous, law-abiding England he remembers from thirty years before. He comes from the airport straight into a race riot—the movie is his nightmare experience of the new London. What we see is an apocalyptic carnival that's like street theatre. At times, it's as if Swinging London had come back as a race riot. Made in a documentary manner as stylized as a Hollywood musical, the movie is hyperconscious of art, of politics, of itself, and at times it's exasperatingly affectless. At its best, it's playfully Godardian, as in the sequence with the screen split horizontally and three multiracial couples stretched out on top of each other, and the Ghetto Lites singing a reggae version of "My Girl." There are two marvellous performances: by Kapoor and by Claire Bloom, as a woman he deserted long ago. (11/16/87) (Cinema Studio.)

Tough Guys Don't Dance—Norman Mailer directed and did the adaptation of his murder-mystery novel. The setting is Provincetown in November, and we're meant to feel the wintry corruption that has seeped into the town—it involves five or six killings. The writer hero (Ryan O'Neal) is ravaged from hard living with a rich wife and three years in the pen for dealing drugs, but he can tell his tough old father (Lawrence Tierney) that in those three years no man used him for a punk. His having remained anally inviolate is the proof of his manhood. Women victimize him, though—at least, the dirty-sex, Pia Zadora blondes (like Debra Sandlund) do. He has a love-hate bond to them. He needs to escape to a true-love earth-mother brunette (Isabella Rossellini). This is paltry stuff; it has an eerie, dated quality, like a copy of *Playboy* left out in the sun for fifteen years. The women are subhuman, and most of the actors look stranded—lost and undirected. Yet the tawdriness of Mailer's self-exposure and self-glorification has a low-level fascination. After a while, the movie turns into a burlesque of itself. It's thin—thinner than pulp, lacking the shock and suggestiveness of pulp. Mailer isn't enough of a moviemaker to draw us in on a primitive level: we're not caught up in the hero's fear that he may be a murderer, and so we're outside the movie from first to last. What Mailer provides is an intellectual's idea of a pulp thriller. You stare at it knowing it's hopeless yet not really wanting to leave. With Wings Hauser and John Bedford Lloyd. Cinematography by John Bailey. (9/21/87) (Cinema Village; starting Feb. 24.)

The Unbearable Lightness of Being—Directed by Philip Kaufman, this adaptation of Milan Kundera's novel is touching in sophisticated ways that you don't expect from an American director. A prankish sex comedy, it treats modern political events with a delicate—yet almost sly—sense of tragedy. It's the way the variations of jealousy and erotic attraction are played out by the three principal actors—an Englishman (Daniel Day-Lewis), a Swedish woman (Lena Olin), and a Frenchwoman (Juliette Binoche), all playing Czechs—that gives the movie its wonderfully unresolved texture. The story begins in Prague in 1968, during the period of freedom of expression and artistic flowering known as "socialism with a human face." Day-Lewis's Tomas is a hedonist, a womanizer, and an eminent young brain surgeon; Olin's Sabina, a painter who is his longtime sex partner, and Binoche's Tereza, whom he marries, represent the two poles of his life—lightness and weight. Kaufman has an exuberant temperament, and the spirit of the film is younger and looser than that of the book; a short two hours and fifty-three minutes, the picture has a whirling beauty. With Derek de Lint as the professor who's too virtuous for Sabina, Pavel Landovsky as the man with the tiny pet pig, Erland Josephson as the barroom janitor who was formerly the Czech ambassador in Vienna, Donald Moffat as the chief surgeon, Stellan Skarsgard as the engineer, and Daniel Olbrychski as the interior ministry official. Script by Jean-Claude Carrière and Kaufman; editing by Walter Murch; cinematography by Sven Nykvist. (The Prague scenes were shot in Lyons and Paris.) (2/8/88) (Loews Tower East.)

The Untouchables—Set in Chicago circa 1930—Al Capone's capital of crime—this Brian De Palma movie, from a script by David Mamet, is like an attempt to visualize the public's collective dream of Chicago gangsters. Our movie-fed imagination of the past is enlarged and given a new vividness. De Palma is a showman here. Everything is neatly done in broad strokes, and the slight unbelievability of it all makes it more enjoyable. Robert De Niro's Capone is a plump peacock with receding hair and a fat cigar in his mouth. The four men who fight to restore the honor of a corrupted society—the four who can't be bribed, the Untouchables—are the fresh-faced young Special Agent Eliot Ness, played by Kevin Costner; a smart, ornery veteran cop, played (magnificently) by Sean Connery; a rookie-cop sharpshooter (Andy Garcia); and a small, middle-aged accountant (Charles Martin Smith). It's not a great movie; it's too banal, too morally comfortable—the script is too obvious. But it's a great audience movie. Cinematography by Stephen H. Burum; music by Ennio Morricone. (Every now and then you may wonder what Morricone's throbbing disco-synthesizer beat is doing in this period.) (6/29/87) (Embassy; starting Feb. 19.)

Wall Street—Oliver Stone makes films in the overwrought pulp style of directors like Samuel Fuller and Robert Aldrich. Everything has the hysterically urgent tone of a war movie, and the actors scream their lines as if they were struggling to be heard above the din of artillery fire. Applying his combat-zone sensibility to the financial community, Stone produces some good, weird comedy in the movie's manic first hour, as the young stockbroker hero (Charlie Sheen) claws his way to success by providing inside information to a ruthless corporate raider (Michael Douglas). As the picture goes on, though, the disparity between Stone's complex subject and his melodramatic style becomes less and less entertaining. Repeating the worst idea in "Platoon," he turns the movie into a contest for the young hero's soul, a battle between his decent union-man father (Martin Sheen) and the greedy, reptilian Douglas. The dialogue gets overexplicit, the tone becomes desperately moralistic, and we begin to wonder if Charlie Sheen's soul is really worth all this fuss. (At one point, he steps out onto his balcony and muses aloud, "Who am I?," and the audience has to think a minute: Tom Cruise? Judd Nelson?) Also with Daryl Hannah (cruelly directed), Hal Holbrook, and Terence Stamp.—T.R. (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Gotham Cinema, and Criterion Center.)



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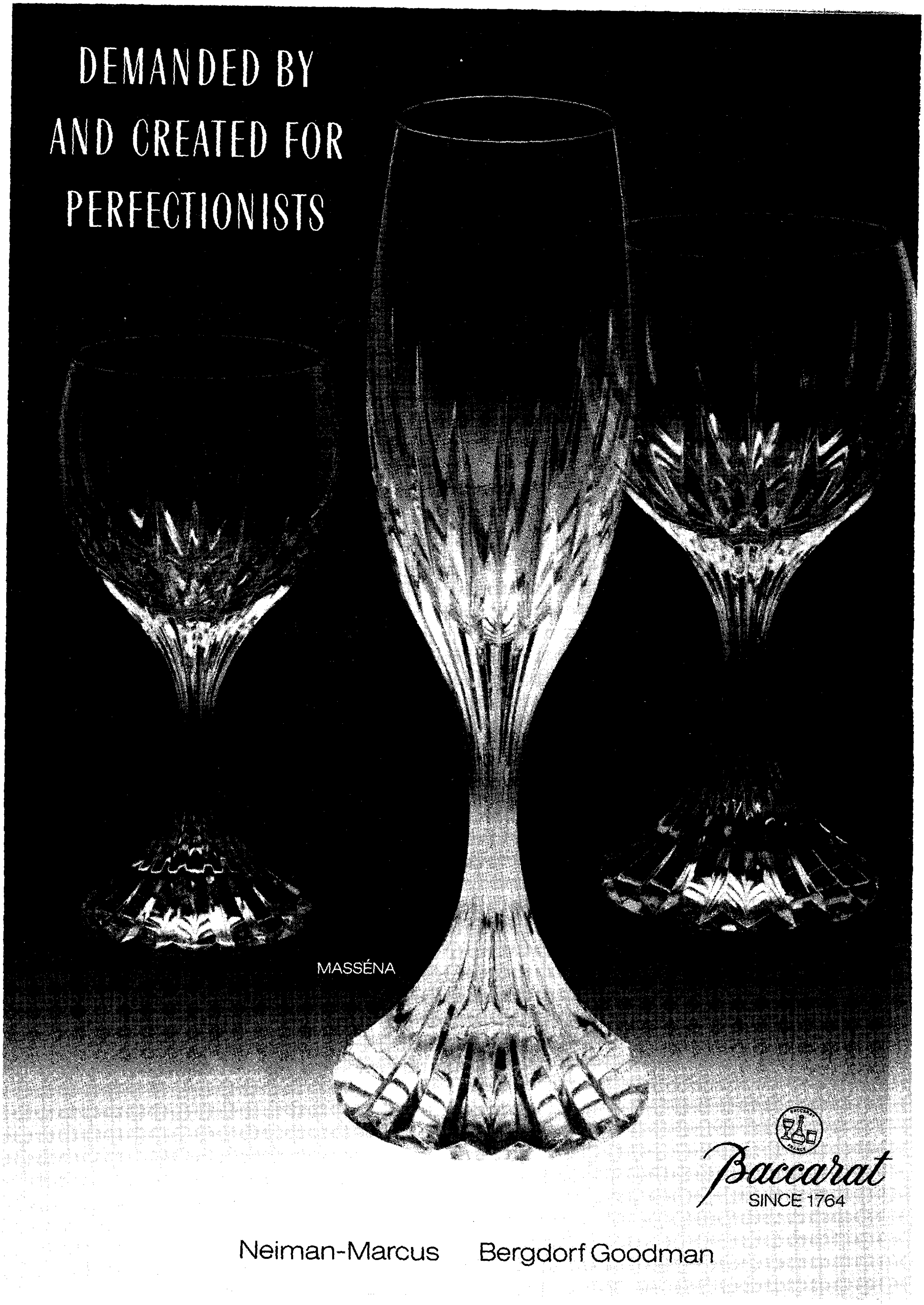
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THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

Notes and Comment

IT'S often said that television has condensed experience and sliced it up into bite-size bits—has reduced politics to thirty-second spots, and shrunk sports to ribbons of highlights on the late news. But cable has changed that, and now all of us—or, anyway, those of us who subscribe to cable TV in Manhattan—can watch broadcasts of *whole events*, with all the long-windedness and redundancy of reality. The other night, C-SPAN, the congressional cable channel, was showing not "the Iowa caucuses" but *an* Iowa caucus—the 67th Precinct caucus in Des Moines. Four long hours of democracy in action. At precisely the same time, MSG—just two levels up and one jog over on the cable box—was broadcasting, live and unedited, three hours of preliminary judging at the Westminster Kennel Club show at Madison Square Garden.

"It takes thirty-nine members to be viable." Paulee Lipsman, a small woman with short dark hair and the kind of urgent voice one associates more with a Village reform club than with the Middle West, is trying to get the room organized. The camera pans across lots of empty seats and occasionally spots someone wearing a "Gephardt" or a "Babbitt" button and looking bored. The camera pans again and rests for the length of a commercial on a weary woman wearing a sweater with "IRELAND" across the front and a shamrock beneath.

The first judge is judging what the announcer—a man with the jovial yet taciturn manner of an airline pilot—is calling "the sportin' dogs." The judge has the broad shoulders and haughty, flushed face of a great French maître d'—not the cringing, obsequious maître d' of a French restaurant on the upper East Side but the dictator of a three-star in Lyons. One after another, the handlers run with their sportin' dogs, to show off the dogs' gaits. It's like a sequence from an old Andy Warhol movie—dogs trot alongside faceless handlers, who are visible only from the waist down.

The preference groups have begun to move together. The camera pans the room. "Are the *observers* being counted with the caucus groups?" Ms. Lipsman wants to know. She has asked this at least six times in the last five minutes. "Please make sure that if you're an observer—if you're not here to indicate a Presidential preference—you are over on this side of the room. Uncommitteds on the stage."

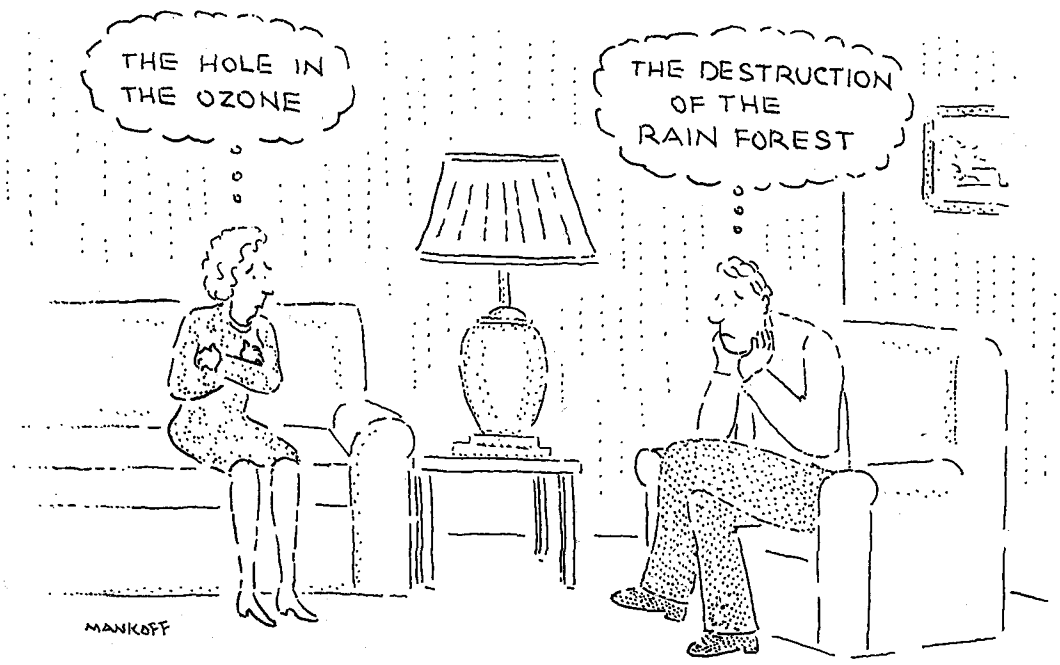
"The Brittany." The announcer speaks the names of the breeds with a sigh. "The German shorthaired pointer." A huge roar from the crowd at the Garden. "The golden retriever. They have more obedience-trial victories than the next three breeds combined. . . . The Clumber spaniel. This breed should have a massive head and a slo-o-ow gait. This isn't a speed contest. Let that dog *just walk*. . . . The American cocker spaniel. Well, it's crowd-pleasin', isn't it? But remember that excessive coat in this breed *is* penalized."

"How many Gephardt?" "Only nineteen." (Only nineteen! Is this significant? Over on CBS and NBC, are they already analyzing this?) "How many Dukakis?" Voice from the assembly: "We're still counting." Other voice: "No, three hundred!" Paulee Lipsman is about to write the number down, then realizes that it's a joke, and wrinkles her nose. "Any Gore?" No Gore. "Is there a Hart group? Any Harts at all? You need forty-one to be viable. Forty-one to be viable. About forty-one people in your group to get one delegate. . . . All right, why don't we recaucus and all of you who are not viable may want to try and become viable."

Over on ABC, real television: "Elvis and Me." The year changes every fifteen minutes or so, just after the commercials: 1965, 1969, 1972. Stock documentary montage is inserted to indicate the sudden leaps in time. Whenever we return to the story, Elvis has got fatter. He puts on weight in chunks, spurts, inflating in stop-action, moving inexorably toward precisely eleven o'clock and 1977. Back on cable, whole subcultures—dog lovers and Midwestern activists, Paulee Lipsman and the Clumber spaniel—parade by at their natural pace, their natural gait. They're living as slowly as we ourselves do, and we're so unaccustomed to TV looking like us that it seems ironic. On television, real life looks avant-garde.

"He's makin' his cut," says the announcer. The judge points almost absently at one dog and then another. "The German shorthaired pointer. The English springer spaniel. The Irish setter. The Gordon setter."

Gephardt, Simon, Dukakis, Jackson. Repercussions and mutual recriminations in Des Moines. "Why did we make a deal for a delegate?" says a woman who resembles Erma Bombeck. "There has been a misunderstanding, for which I'm somewhat—some would say exclusively—respon-


THE HOLE IN THE OZONE
THE DESTRUCTION OF THE RAIN FOREST
MANKOFF

DIVISION OF LABOR

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sible," says a man who is a dead ringer for Corbin Bernsen, on "L.A. Law."

New dogs. Slim, hungry dogs—what kind are these? Hounds! A new judge, shorter, has replaced the *maître d'*. "That otter hound is a good-movin' dog." This judge, more self-conscious than the previous judge, sets up the dogs in a long line and walks back and forth, purposefully, in front of them. "That's *quite* a stride for a small one," the announcer says. He says it with such appreciative warmth that a long cable-TV minute goes by before it is plain beyond dispute (not one of the dogs has moved a muscle) that he really, truly, is talking about the judge.

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Seltzer

IDEALLY, the Good Health Seltzer concept operates this way: people buy the seltzer, they take it home and drink it, they buy some more, and eventually they get healthy. The seltzer has vitamins. Someone from Good Health Seltzer puts the vitamins in the seltzer, and then the vitamins get put in the person who drinks the seltzer. So the concept can't not work, although if you yourself happen to be the Good Health Seltzer people, just to be on the safe side it's not a bad idea if you arrange a hospitable public gathering: you rent the restaurant of a health club, to set the tone; you ask the chef to prepare a bunch of benign-looking food; you invite some influential friends—from *Exercise for Men Only*, *Better Nutrition*, *Today's Living*, *Modern Grocer*, *Good Food Magazine*, *Hispanic Review*, *Leisure Beverage Insider Newsletter*, and the like—and you also invite some healthy talent, in the form of celebrity bartenders.

Helen O'Connell, the still beautiful thrush; Floyd Patterson, the dignified ex-champ; and Howard Johnson, the switch-hitting, hard-charging third baseman for the Mets—this was the Good Health Seltzer talent pool. All three celebrity bartenders wore white aprons and poured seltzer. HoJo, in particular, poured very carefully. There was no way he was going to mess up the Mets' image by pouring seltzer sloppily. He and Helen and Floyd smiled while they poured. They smiled not because they had nothing better to do or because someone at Good Health Seltzer had promised each of them a hefty four-figure appearance fee, or anything like that, but because they believed in the Good Health Seltzer concept: the you-buy-it-you-drink-it-you-buy-some-more-you-get-healthy strategy.

Bill Martin, the president of Good Health Beverages, Inc., who resembles Ted Turner minus the mustache, yacht, ball club, and communications empire, greeted people at the door. When it came time for him to stand at a microphone and say a few words, he mentioned Michael—no last name, just Michael—who was in attendance, and who only the previous weekend had seen a Good Health Seltzer display in the grocery store and had bought a case and taken it home. He asked Michael to stand up and be recognized. Michael did. Bill Martin also mentioned Vitamin B6, Vitamin B12, niacin, pantothenic acid, folic acid, and biotin; he asked Frank Renner, "the No. 1 salesman in the United States," to take a little bow; and he introduced Dr. Barry Saltzman, who had come all the way from the West Coast to point out that it had taken plenty of nutritional research and development to devise a way to get the vitamins into the seltzer. It wasn't as if Dr. Saltzman had just decided one day to pump a bunch of vitamins into a glass of seltzer. It took him three solid years to get the hang of it. Dr. Saltzman was a large man who seemed to have foraged widely in quest of vitamins.

When Dr. Saltzman stood at the microphone, he said, "Quality control experts . . . on-site inspections . . . our specifications . . . high standards . . . in-house research facilities . . . revolutionary system of nutritional ingredients . . . abreast of all advances in nutrient technology . . . development team from our roster of consulting nutritional experts . . . Quality assurance and high standards will be applied to all future products."

Helen O'Connell sang "Green Eyes" and then sang, to the tune of "Green Eyes," a little song about Good Health Seltzer. Howard Johnson said he works hard twelve months a year and gets thirsty. Floyd Patterson said, "Now, as far as Good Health is concerned—" He turned around to look at a Good Health Seltzer banner that was hanging on a wall behind him. "Make sure I got the name right.

As far as Good Health Seltzer is concerned, I was sent a box the other day. I like it with lemon in it."

Someone asked Frank Renner for his autograph. He said, "I'm not really the No. 1 salesman in the United States. That's a little exaggeration. I'm from Brooklyn, New York. I survived, and my family's still there. That's it. What more can I tell you?"

Hall of Fame

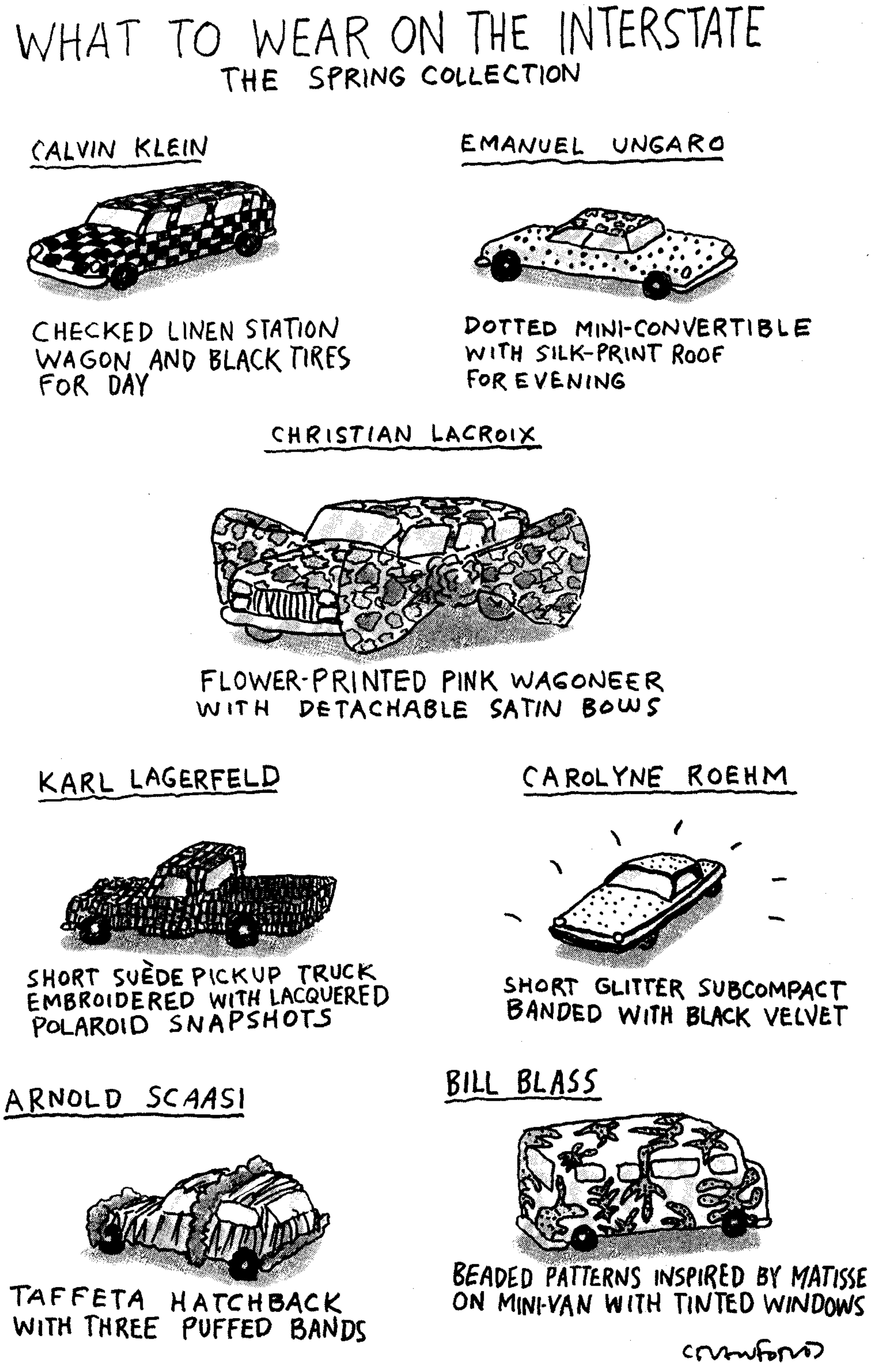
AT the moment, the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame is about two inches high, is made of plastic, and is stored in the architectural-model shop at I. M. Pei & Partners' Madison Avenue offices. Someday soon, the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame will be built in Cleveland, and then it will be much bigger—it will have a two-hundred-foot tower, a huge, tent-shaped glass atrium, a music and film library, exhibits, listening rooms, performance spaces, and all sorts of tributes to its inductees. "We are far, far from finished," Mr. Pei, who is designing the building, told us the other day. "Still, everyone seems to want to know about it. My family are more excited about the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame than they are even about my work on the Louvre."

Mr. Pei is known for making big, dignified buildings, like the east wing of the National Gallery in Washington, and he confessed that in the beginning he had had doubts about the new project. "When the committee from the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame Foundation came and asked me to design the building, I was taken aback," he said, throwing his hands in the air the way the Solid Gold Dancers sometimes do. "I told them, 'You know, I'm not a fan. I'm really not.' When I thought of rock and roll, all I thought of was my kids, and with me it was always 'Kids, turn it down! Turn it *down!*' But the people on the committee said that it didn't matter that I wasn't yet a fan, and I was greatly encouraged. And so I started my musical education."

Mr. Pei, who says he prefers classical music, is seventy years old, compact, black-haired, and dapper. When we met him, he was wearing a rich dark suit and a floral tie, and eyeglasses with round, thick black frames. He uses a square black lacquer table for a desk, and all the notes and papers on it, we noticed, were in perfectly squared-off piles. After a few minutes, four architects who are also working on the Hall of Fame and who took part in the rock-and-roll education of Mr. Pei came in. They were Craig Rhodes, the project manager (partial to Eurythmics, Kate Bush, and reggae, and currently nurturing an interest in blues), Sophia Gruzdys (major fan of Pink Floyd, Led Zep, Jimmy Yancey), Christopher Rand (into Bach, but sympathetic to the concept of rock and roll), and Michael Rose (seventies-power-pop casualty and ashamed of it, but he's only twenty-two).

"I'm a rock-and-roll fan from way, way back, so when I heard that we might do the project I immediately called Mr. Pei and said, 'Well, *I'm* available,' " Mr. Rhodes said as he sat down.

"Yes, this is one project I had no trouble staffing," Mr. Pei added. "No trouble at all. But first I had to know


WHAT TO WEAR ON THE INTERSTATE
THE SPRING COLLECTION
CALVIN KLEIN
CHECKED LINEN STATION WAGON AND BLACK TIRES FOR DAY
EMANUEL UNGARO
DOTTED MINI-CONVERTIBLE WITH SILK-PRINT ROOF FOR EVENING
CHRISTIAN LACROIX
FLOWER-PRINTED PINK WAGONEER WITH DETACHABLE SATIN BOWS
KARL LAGERFELD
SHORT SUÈDE PICKUP TRUCK EMBROIDERED WITH LACQUERED POLAROID SNAPSHOTS
CAROLYNE ROEHM
SHORT GLITTER SUBCOMPACT BANDED WITH BLACK VELVET
ARNOLD SCAASI
TAFFETA HATCHBACK WITH THREE PUFFED BANDS
BILL BLASS
BEADED PATTERNS INSPIRED BY MATISSE ON MINI-VAN WITH TINTED WINDOWS
crawford

if I was right for it. I had to know what rock and roll was. American music to me is like a tree, and I wondered if rock and roll was just a branch or part of the trunk of the tree. If rock and roll was just a branch, I wasn't interested. So I turned to Craig, and he made tapes for me. He culled the most important music for me to hear. It was *fascinating.*"

"We also sat together and talked quite a lot," Mr. Rhodes said. "Mr. Pei asked me a lot of questions. We spoke about who Elvis was, and the Beatles, and he asked me about the future of rock and roll. I told him that there were so many evolutionary parallel streams now that you couldn't exactly say what rock and roll was. Actually, I couldn't answer a lot of his questions. But I did make him these tapes, and I put on country and Western, and blues, and psychedelic bands. I included some Grateful Dead, and I even put on the Sex Pistols. I put on some disco, too, although I don't think much of it."

Ms. Gruzdys leaned across the table and said to Mr. Rhodes, "Donna Summer? You put on *Donna Summer*?"

"No, it was Silver Convention—'Fly, Robin, Fly,' or something like that," Mr. Rhodes answered. "I don't really remember."

Ms. Gruzdys said, "You know, I had this dream of taking Mr. Pei to some East Village place, like CBGB. The idea of him there was an amazing concept."

Mr. Pei said, "I found all the music on Craig's tape quite remarkable. Then the people from the foundation took me on a trip to New Orleans and Memphis, which convinced me that I should undertake the project."

We asked Mr. Pei what he did when he was in Memphis.

He took a short, sharp breath and said, "*Elvis*. And we went into those music halls on Beale Street. Some of them had old music posters hanging up that were made of metal. I loved those metal music posters. I became quite fascinated by them." Mr. Pei tapped Mr. Rhodes on the knee. "Craig, we must have some of those old metal posters for our building."

Mr. Pei's secretary came into the room and handed him a note. As he was reading it, he started to laugh, and said, "Can you imagine? This is from my symphony-hall client in Dallas! Here are the two ends of a spectrum—the symphony and rock and roll!"

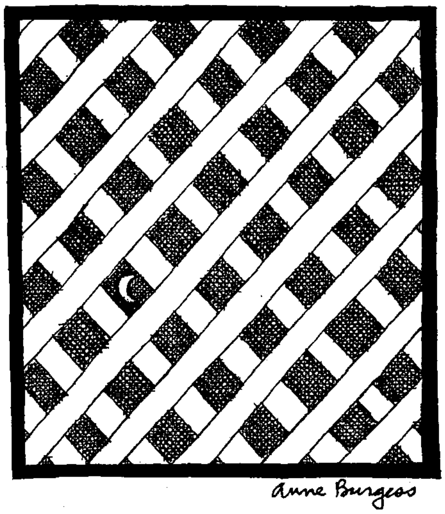
Mr. Rhodes produced a large white box, which he told us the team members called their sushi box of models. He turned the box over, and nine tiny Halls of Fame fell on the table. "See these forms that are sort of *exploding* off the main tower?" he said, fingering one of the little buildings. "We're trying to depict an explosion—to show that rock and roll has a dangerous and expansive feeling."

"I did go to Graceland, but it's not a model for us at all," Mr. Pei said. "It is true Americana, but our building will talk about something very different."

Mr. Pei told us that his crash course in rock and roll had left him with a taste for the genre, and that he is especially fond of the Beatles, early Dylan, Chuck Berry, and Fats Domino. He hasn't yet extended his study to bands like Throbbing Gristle and Twisted Sister. He also said that as soon as he felt that his education was ready to enter another phase he'd gone to see some live performances, starting with Paul Simon at Radio City Music Hall and Genesis at the Meadowlands. At the Hall of Fame Foundation induction ceremony and concert recently, he had especially liked Little Richard. "What a performer!" he said. "Was he always like that?"

The Living Paintings

A GRADUATE student from the Institute of Fine Arts and a crew from Cable News Network arrived at the New Museum of Contemporary Art, downtown on Broadway, at the same time—eleven o'clock on a Friday morning—and Sara Palmer, after a moment's hesitation, sent them downstairs together (the museum offices are all below ground) to talk to the Living Paintings. The week was presenting unfamiliar problems for Sara and her boss, Terrie Sultan, who, as the public-affairs staff of the museum, are accustomed to dealing mostly with art journalists—reporters from *Artforum* or *Art in America*, photographers from the *Voice* centerfold. Pieces about the Living Paintings had already appeared in the *Times* and on both the local and national CBS news; a crew was coming down from Radio Québec, in Montreal; a Japanese correspondent was working on a report for Japanese television. Even the *News* was doing a story. Sara decided to send the graduate student downstairs because she had learned that television crews *liked* having other inquisitors and viewers around the Living Paintings—they provided material for "reaction shots."



The Living Paintings are an event—part performance art, part trompe-l'oeil, part some kind of delayed-release Wildean dandyism—created by the British sculptor Stephen Taylor Woodrow. (They caused a sensation in England.) From noon until closing time, Wednesday through Sunday, three young men dressed in haut-bourgeois costume—overcoats, waistcoats, stiff collars—are suspended inside picture frames on one wall of the New Museum. They stand freely inside the frames, without any visible support, and so seem to have sprung out of the backgrounds. The three figures are covered from head to toe in solid, monochrome paint—one black-purple, one dark red, and one blue—and the backgrounds of the pictures are correspondingly colored and are sculptured in low relief to suggest checkered marble floors, heroic flourishes of drapery, small tables with still-life arrangements of flowers and fruit. The three living figures move, but move slowly and deliberately, striking the various pompous poses of nineteenth-century "official" portraiture—shoulders thrust out, legs confidently apart, hands first grasping the lapels of their coats and then moving Napoleonically inside—and occasionally they summon a viewer over for a grave handshake.

At the foot of the stairs and around a corner, the graduate student and the CNN crew found three handsome young men dressed in long underwear. One was on his feet, smiling and holding out a hand in greeting. The others were sitting on the carpeted floor—one with his knees drawn up to his forehead, one with his legs stretched out in front of him. Neither looked up.

"I'm Stephen Taylor Woodrow," the standing young man said brightly. "The Living Painting."

"*One* of the Living Paintings," the young man with his knees raised said.

"Though the *head* Living Painting," the third young man added, dolefully.

Stephen Taylor Woodrow turned toward his colleagues. "This is Dale Devereux Barker," he said, pointing to the one who had spoken first. "And this"—meaning the one with the outstretched legs—"is James Melloy. Infused, as you can see, with the animated spirit of the Living Paintings."

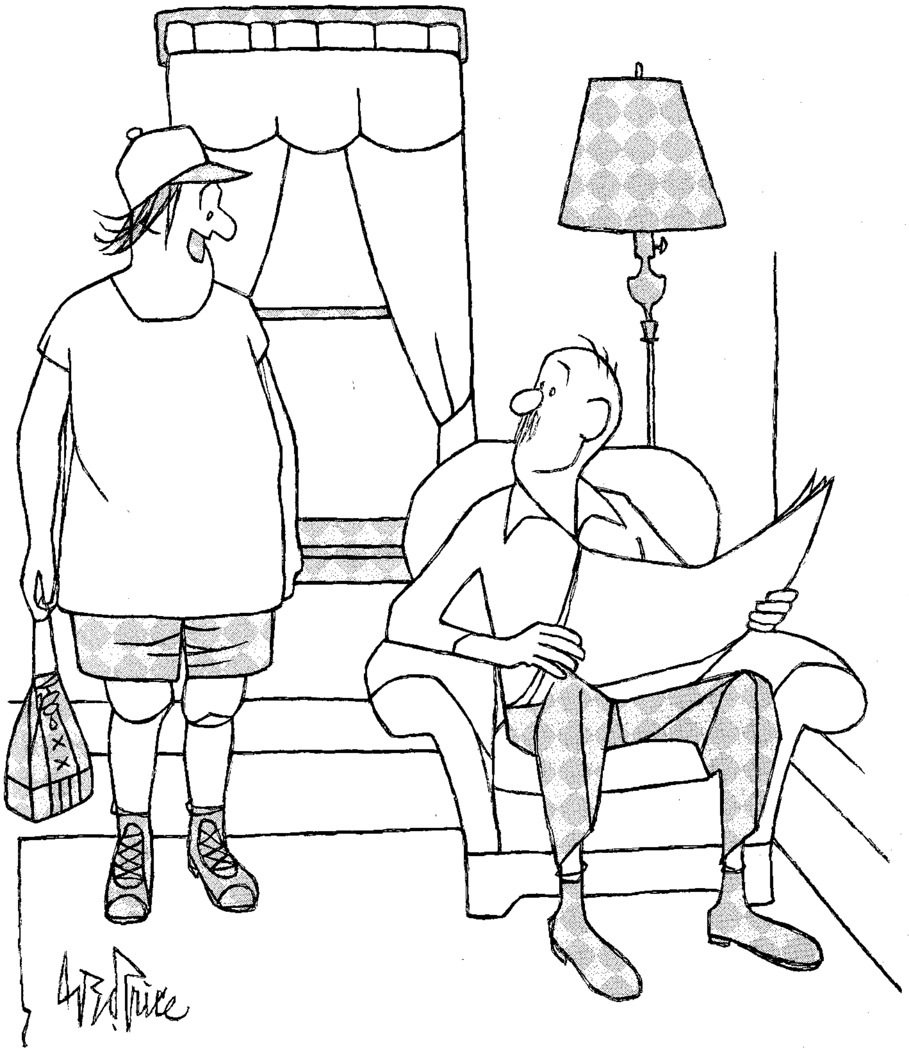
In a corner nearby, the three costumes of the Living Paintings were laid out, one on top of another. The sound man walked over and picked up the blue overcoat. It was stiff with paint, and stood straight up as he held it. "Geez, you gotta work up *some sweat* in that," he said.

"Can we shoot you while you're getting dressed?" the interviewer from CNN asked Stephen.

Stephen blushed. "Well, I'm a little—" He indicated his tattered long johns. "Perhaps we—the three of us—could talk for a few minutes, and then, perhaps, you might want to shoot me while I'm in costume, about to apply my makeup?" The graduate student and the interviewer followed him down the corridor to a small, brightly lit dressing room.

"I *love* the piece. I think it's deeply provocative," the graduate student said. "I'm particularly intrigued by your decision to make the piece so aggressively archaized—a living painting of the *last* century rather than this one. Would you accept the notion that the piece is primarily a comment on the experience of the modern museum, rather than of modern art?"

Stephen began to struggle into an odd military-looking contraption of straps and buckles: it came around his shoulders, crossed at his crotch, and then formed stirrups under his feet. "The nineteenth century?" he said. "Well, I'm a sculptor, really. I quite hate painting. It's merely craft and cheap illusion. The piece began to take form in my mind when I was looking at the work of a French chap named Dalou—"



"I'll be on the main drag, turning a few heads."

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"Dalou! The funerary monument in the Père Lachaise!" The graduate student nodded enthusiastically.

Stephen could see that the interviewer from CNN was a little confused. "You see, Dalou was a French sculptor of the last century," he said. "A contemporary of Rodin?" He looked at the graduate student, who nodded again. "And he was given a commission to make a monument to a journalist who had been murdered by an aristocrat. So he simply made a life-size, prostrate figure of the man, not draped in classical costume but dressed in exactly what he had been wearing when he was killed, with a sculptured image of his top hat lying several feet to one side, just as it had fallen when he was murdered. I was transfixed by sculpture that outdid painting in that way—by the mystery of the work, and the *defiance* of it, too. I hope that the Living Paintings can work on many levels simultaneously. First of all, as with Dalou's piece, there's the level of confrontation—the refusal of art to become art. Then, it's a comment on commerce—these are paintings that, because they're living, cannot be bought. Of course, in another sense it's a joke *about* illusion. If the end of art is to imitate life, then why not . . ." He let the sentence trail off gracefully, and then added, "Above all, the Living Paintings are a comment on the act of looking. One man stares at another in the street: an act of aggression. One man stares at the image of another in the museum: an act of connoisseurship. Now, what if the image *looks back*? Aggression? Or another kind of connoisseurship al-

HALL FARMS
DAVENPORT, IOWA

"Is it just me, or has it suddenly gotten awfully quiet around here?"

together, a looking-glass connoisseurship—the resentful connoisseurship of the thing made for its maker?" He smiled, and there was a silence while the graduate student finished scribbling down everything that Stephen had said.

Back in the hallway, the two other young men seemed not to have moved. "How did you decide to be a Living Painting?" the interviewer asked James Melloy.

James gave it a lot of thought. "I'm not really sure," he said. He turned to Dale Devereux Barker. "How *did* we get here?" he asked.

"The party," Dale said.

"Ah, yes. You see, there was this party, and Stephen said, 'How would you like to come to New York and be a Living Painting?' The others who had been Living Paintings in Britain had decided not to make the trip, he said. I thought, Two weeks in New York! All my life, I'd dreamed of New York."

"Well, we are *staying* in a pleasant place, James," Dale said, looking up for the first time, and he explained to the interviewer, "It's a penthouse of one of the trustees—on Fifty-eighth Street."

James brightened momentarily. "Yes, Fifty-eighth Street. It's quite nice, isn't it? Lovely view of the Empire State." There was a pause. "Yesterday, up on that wall, I thought I had lost my mind," he said to no one in particular.

"Living Painting madness, we call that," Dale interjected sympathetically.

James went on, "I thought that my harness had come loose, and I was sure that I was about to begin spinning. It was only two o'clock, and I thought, I shall be spinning round and round on this frame for four more hours."

Stephen emerged from the dressing room in his long underwear and harness. His face and hair now wore an undercoat of black. At the sight of him, Dale and James climbed wearily to their feet.

"What about the implicit Christian iconography of the piece?" the graduate student demanded of Stephen. "Three men hanging, the artist in the middle: Christ and the two thieves?"

"Oh, yes, well," Stephen said. He took out a spray-paint can and, shutting his eyes, gave himself a shot of black paint, right in the face.

A few minutes later, James and Dale emerged from the dressing room, in harness, wearing an undercoat of color on their faces—blue for Dale, dark red for James. They began to struggle into their stiff suits.

The sound man walked over to watch James apply his makeup. "First you apply talcum powder," James explained, in a sorrowful voice, "and then you apply the cake makeup, and then you apply *this*." He held up a can of spray paint. "Stephen worked it all out." James twisted up his face, then sprayed the dark-red paint all over it.

The sound man picked up the can and looked at the label on its back. "Huh, says here, 'Under no circumstances apply to exposed skin,' " he said.

Even beneath the paint, James turned pale. He reached for the can.

The sound man laughed heartily. "No, no, I'm just teasing you," he said.

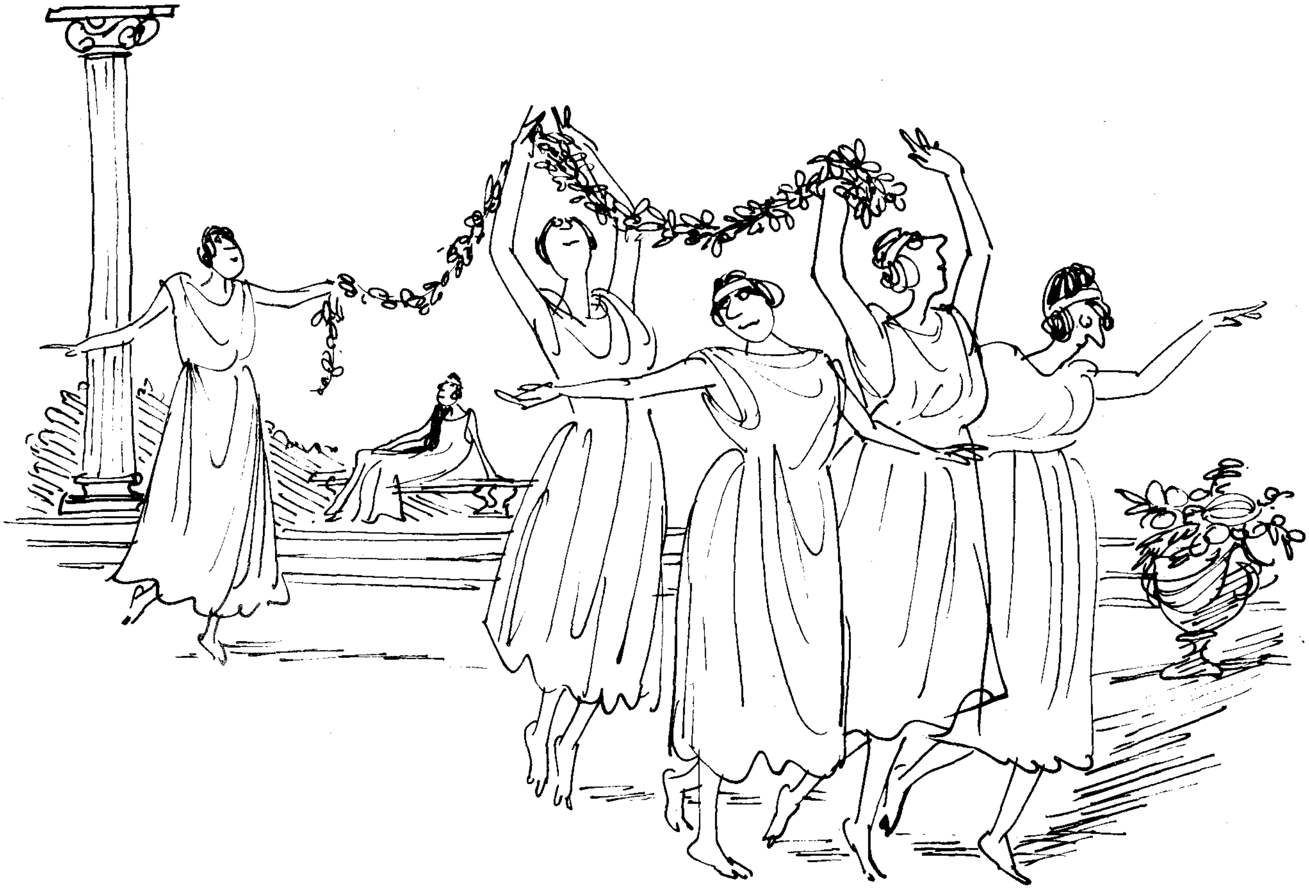
"It *is* an extraordinarily uncomfortable ordeal," Stephen said cheerfully to the interviewer. "I make it worse for myself by putting these in." He reached for a tiny black leather case and snapped it open. Inside were two shellac-hard contact lenses, with evil white irises. "They give me shark eyes," he said, with relish. "The others won't wear them."

A few moments later, all three Living Paintings were ready: costumed, colored, with little harness buckles trailing out through holes cut in the back of their costumes. Stephen asked Sara Palmer, who had come down to check on them, if she was sure that no one was in the gallery upstairs—he makes it an absolute rule that they never be photographed in the act of being attached to the wall—and then the three young men mounted the steps to the gallery. They looked decades older, and a little frightening. From deep inside his costume, James said, "It feels like astronauts, doesn't it?"

"It's amazing," the graduate student said to the sound man after they had gone. "I mean—*Dalou*. Now, *that's* a footnote!"

Days of Tender Passion

culled from
A POETIC ANTHOLOGY
E.H. BUTLER & Co. PHILA.
1851
With six splendid engravings

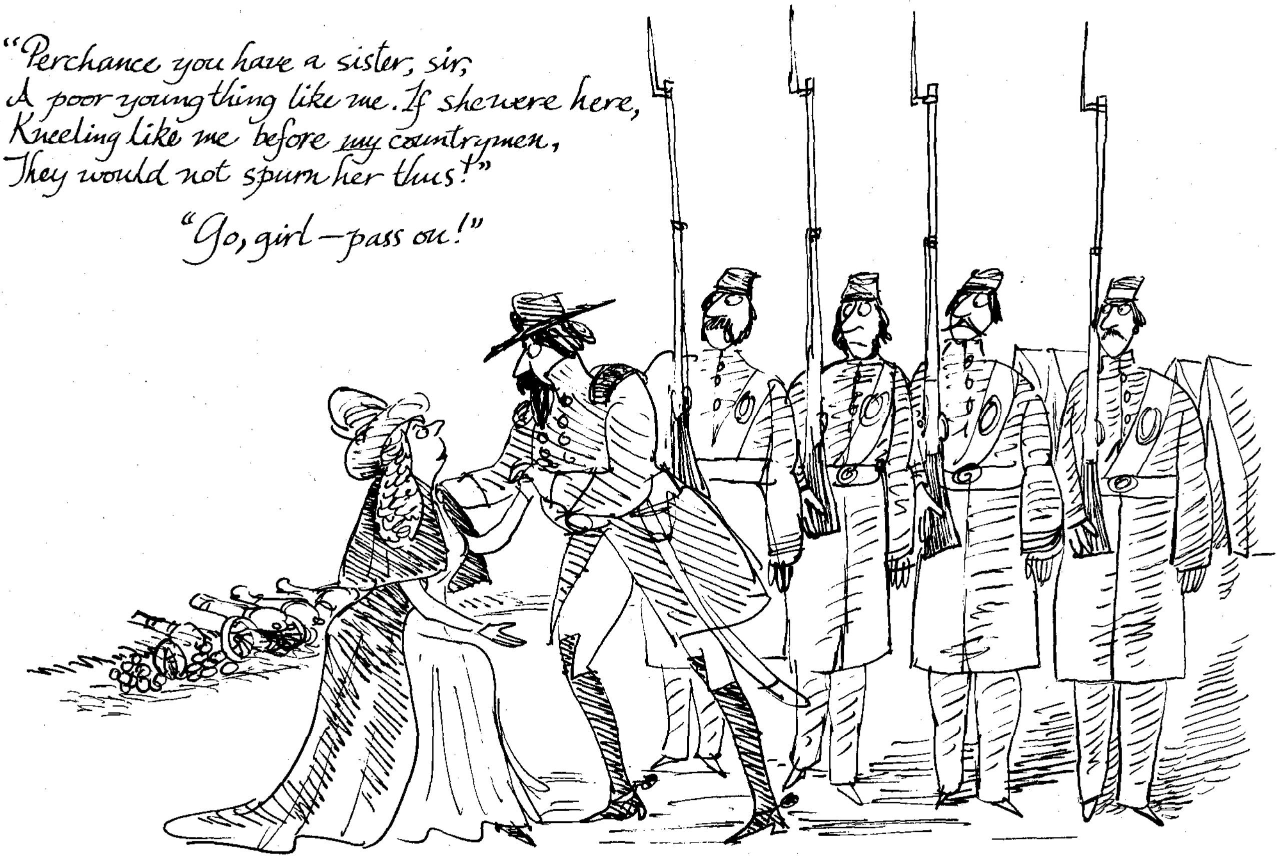


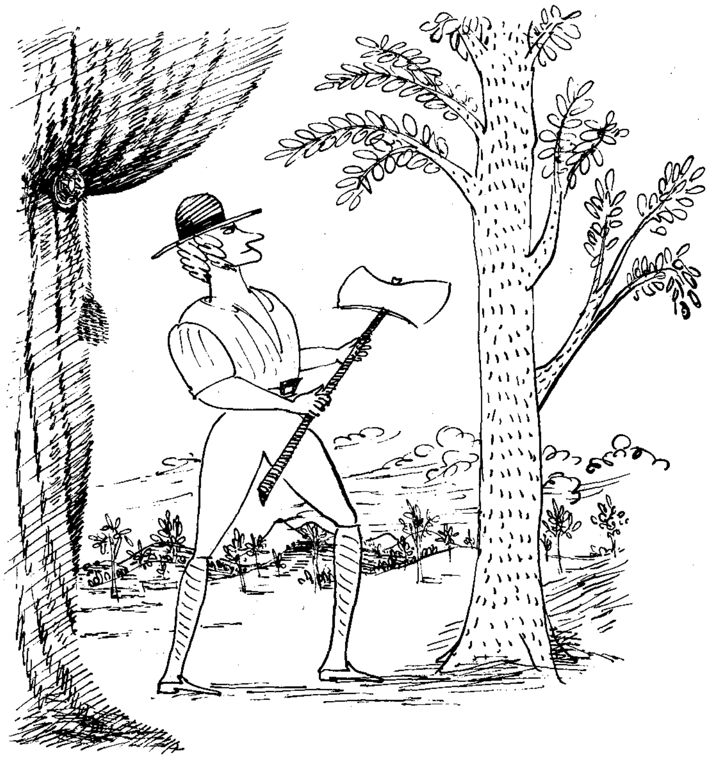
Shrine of the gods!
Mine own eternal Greece!
When shall the gyves that bind thy beauty
rend in twain
And thou be living, breathing Greece again?

Greece! Thy sculptured walls
Have with thy triumphs
and thy glories rung,
Through thy temples and thy pillared halls
Immortal poets sung!

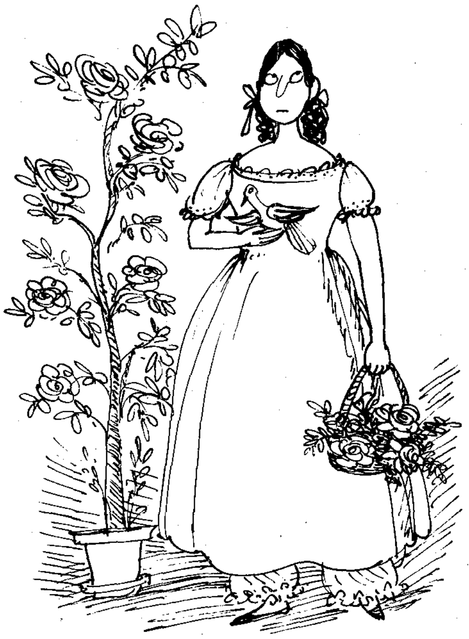
"Perchance you have a sister, sir,
A poor young thing like me. If she were here,
Kneeling like me before _my_ countrymen,
They would not spurn her thus!"

"Go, girl—pass on!"

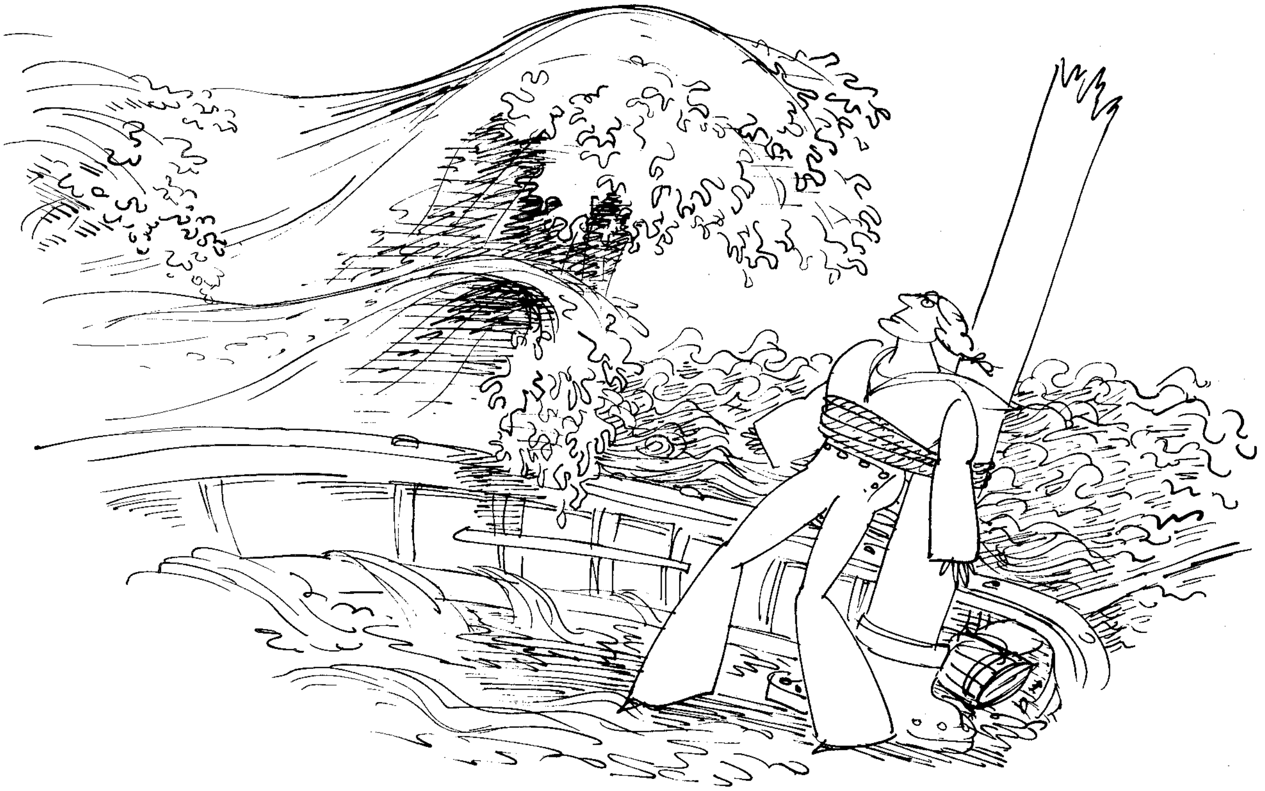




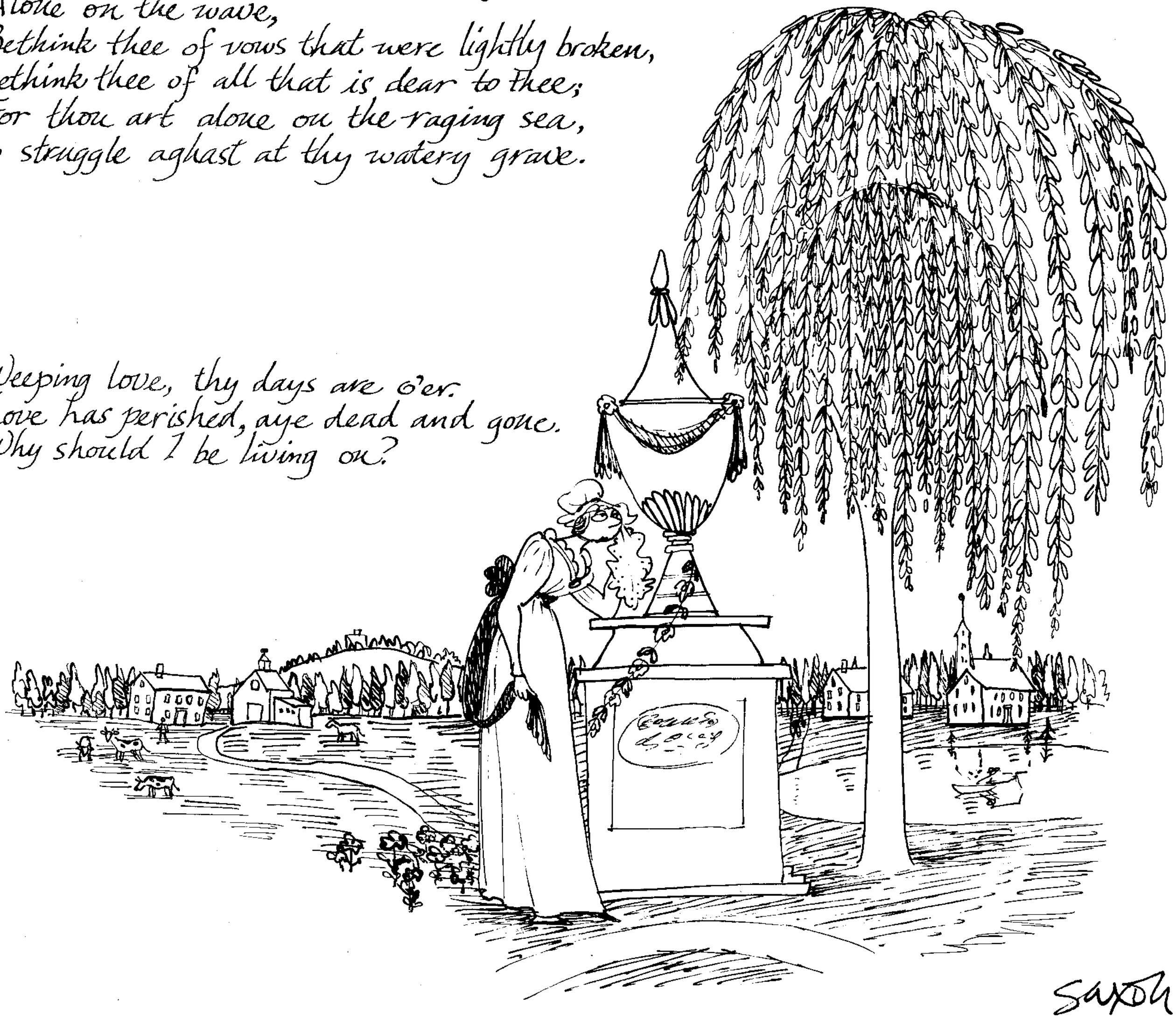
Hail! To the sturdy artisan
Who welded thee, bold wedge!
Though the warrior deem thee weapon
Fashioned only for the slave,
Yet the settler knows thee mightier
Than the tried Damascus glaive.



List thou warbling bird!
Where is thy resting place,
O lone and lovely bird?
Thy drooping pinions
A warmer air have stirred.



Bethink thee, mariner; well of the past.
Alone on the wave,
Bethink thee of vows that were lightly broken,
Bethink thee of all that is dear to thee;
For thou art alone on the raging sea,
To struggle aghast at thy watery grave.



Weeping love, thy days are o'er.
Love has perished, aye dead and gone.
Why should I be living on?

saxon

THREE NEW TWINS JOIN CLUB IN SPRING

MY team won the World Series. You thought we couldn't but we knew we would and we did, and what did your team do? Not much. Now we're heading down to spring training looking even better than before, and your team that looked pitiful then looks even less hot now. Your home-town paper doesn't say so, but your lead-off guy had a bad ear infection in January and now he gets dizzy at the first sign of stress and falls down in a heap. Sad. Your cleanup guy spent the winter cleaning his plate. He had to buy new clothes in a size they don't sell at regular stores. Your great relief guy, his life has been changed by the Rama Lama Ding Dong, and he is now serenely throwing the ball from a place deep within himself, near his gall bladder. What a shame. Your rookie outfielder set a world record for throwing a frozen chicken, at a promotional appearance for Grandma Fanny's Farm Foods. Something snapped in his armpit and now he can't even throw a pair of dice. Tough beans. Your big left-hander tried hypnosis to stop smoking and while in a trancelike state discovered he hated his mother for tying his tiny right hand behind his back and making him eat and draw and tinkle with his left. So he's right-handed now, a little awkward but gradually learning to point with it and wave goodbye. That's what your whole team'll be doing by early May.

Meanwhile, my team, the world-champion Minnesota Twins, are top dogs who look like a lead-pipe cinch to take all the marbles in a slow walk. My guys had a good winter doing youth work. Last October they pooled their Series pay to purchase a farm, Twin Acres, north of Willmar, where they could stay in shape doing chores in the off-season, and they loved it so much they stayed through Thanksgiving and Christmas (celebrating them the good old-fashioned Midwestern way), and raised a new barn, bought a powerful new seed drill to plant winter wheat with, built up the flock of purebred Leghorns, chopped wood, carried water, etc., along with their guests—delinquent boys and girls from St. Louis and Detroit who needed to get out of those sick and destructive environments and learn personal values such as hard work and personal cleanliness. Meanwhile, back in Minneapolis, the Twins front office wasn't asleep on its laurels but through shrewd deals made mostly before 8:15 A.M. added to what they had while giving up nothing in return. It seems unfair.

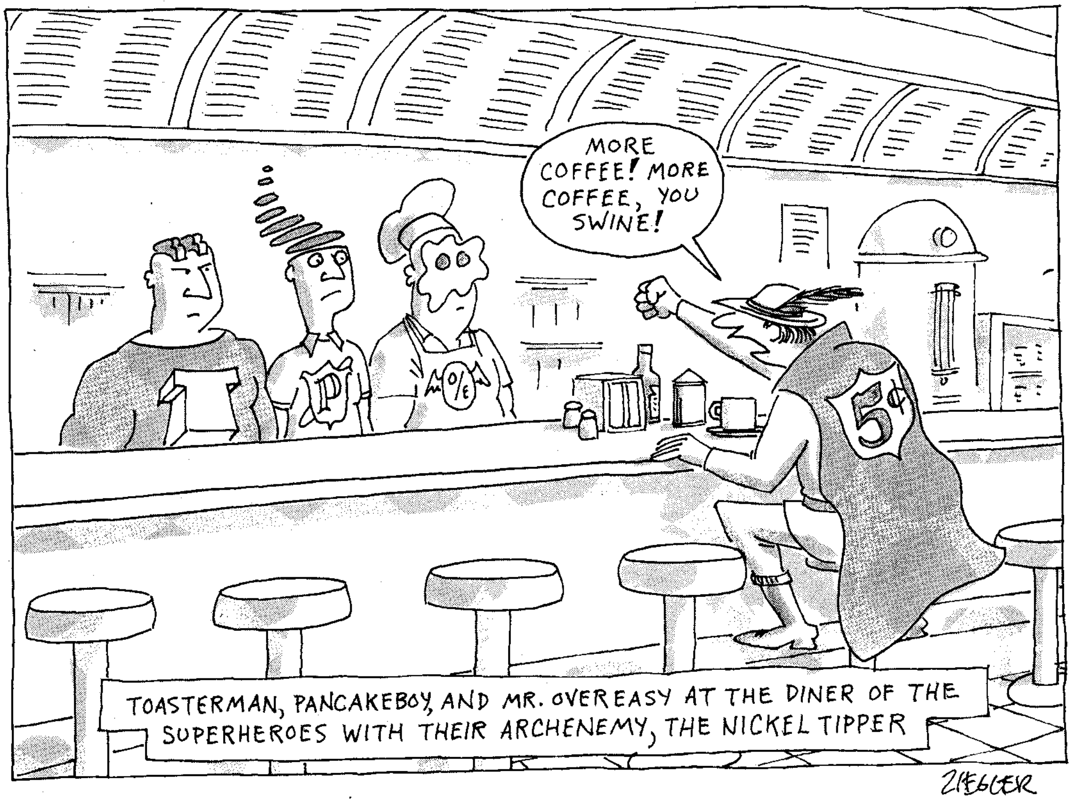
OTHER TEAMS GNASH TEETH OR SULK

It's considered impossible to obtain *three top premium players* without paying a red cent, but the Twins:

¶Traded away some useless air rights for Chuck Johnson (23, 187 lbs., 6′1″, bats left, throws left), a native of Little Falls, Minnesota. Maybe that's why the scouts who work the Finger Lakes League ignored his phenomenal season with the Seneca Falls Susans. They figured, "Minnesota? Forget it!" But how can you forget thirty-eight doubles, twenty-two triples, and twenty-nine round-trippers—and in spacious Elizabeth Cady Stanton Stadium! That's a lot of power for a lifelong liberal like Chuck. And what's more, he *never struck out*. Not once. Plays all positions cheerfully.

¶Sent a couple in their mid-forties to the San Diego Padres in exchange for Duane (Madman) Mueller (29, 280 lbs., 6′2″, right/right, a.k.a. Mule, Hired Hand, The Barber). Duane is a big secret because after he was suspended by the Texas League for throwing too hard he played Nicaraguan winter ball for three years and then spent two more doing humanitarian stuff, so scouts forgot how, back when he was with the Amarillo Compadres, nobody wanted to be behind the plate, Duane threw so hard. His own team kept yelling, "Not so *hard*, man!" If that sounds dumb, then you never saw him throw: he threw *hard*. A devoted Lutheran, he never ever hit a batter, but in one game a pitch of his nicked the bill of a batting helmet and spun it so hard it burned off the man's eyebrows. No serious injury, but big Duane took himself out of organized ball until he could learn an off-speed pitch. He's from Brainerd, Minnesota, where he lives across the street from his folks. His mom played kittenball in the fifties and had a good arm but not like her son's. She thinks he got it from delivering papers and whipping cake mix. "I'd sure hate to have to bat against him," she says.

¶Gave up a dingy two-bedroom house in St. Paul (it needs more than just a paint job and a new roof, and it's near a rendering plant) to acquire and


MORE COFFEE! MORE COFFEE, YOU SWINE!
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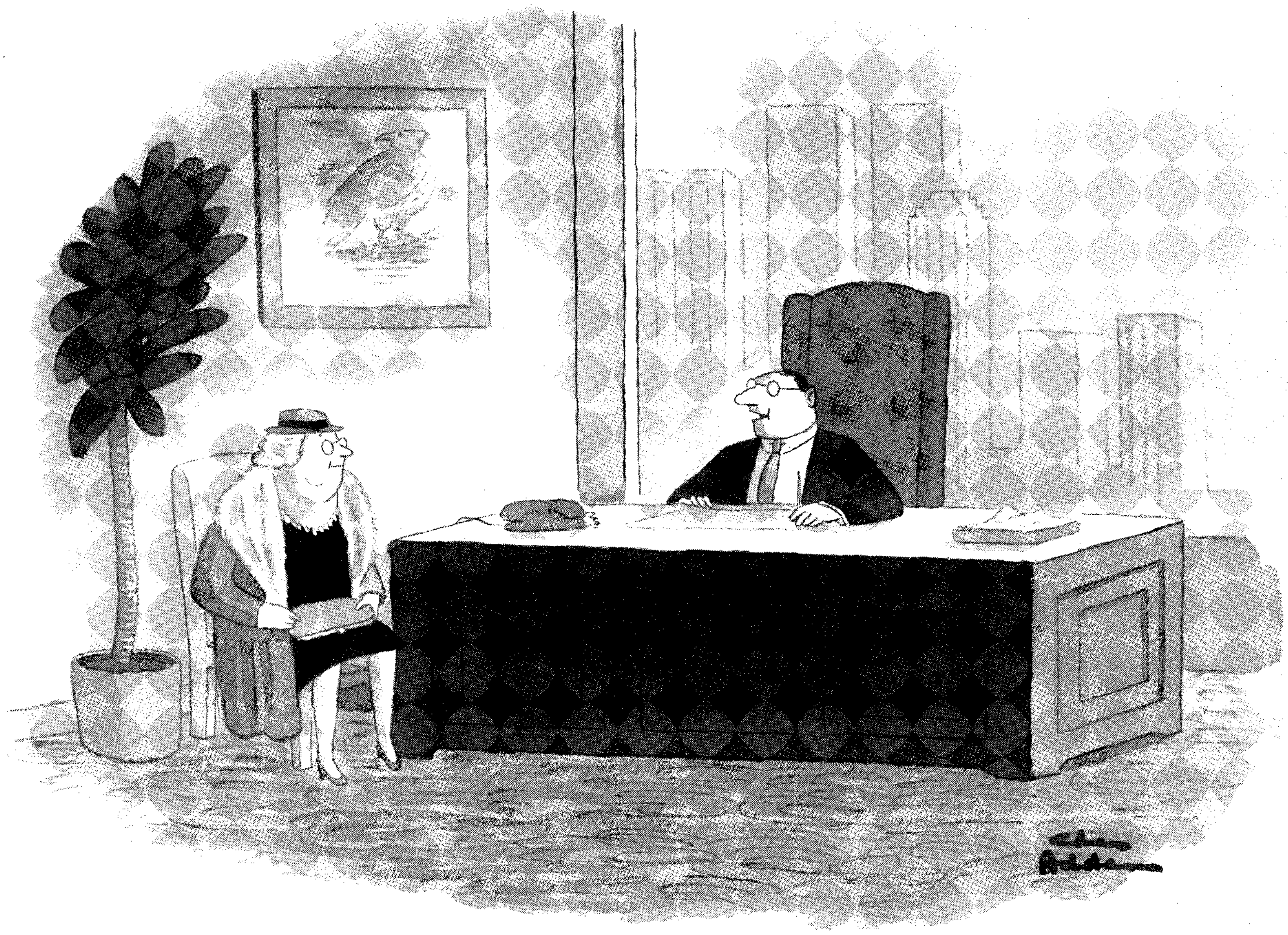
ZIEGLER

TOASTERMAN, PANCAKEBOY, AND MR. OVEREASY AT THE DINER OF THE SUPERHEROES WITH THEIR ARCHENEMY, THE NICKEL TIPPER



"I had the same idea, Mom, but our legal staff said it would only lead to time in the federal penitentiary."

• •

activate Bob Berg (24, 112 lbs., 5′3″, right/left), the fastest man on the base paths today (we *think*), but he sat out last year and the year before last and the year before *that* because he didn't have shoes. Reason: he's so fast he runs the shoes right off his own feet. Now athletic foot specialists have studied his film clips (sad to see: three lightning strides, a look of dismay on Bob's face, and down he goes with his loose laces like a lasso round his ankles) and come up with a new pair of pigskin shoes with barbed cleats that stick in the turf and slow him down. Born and raised in Eveleth, Minnesota, he is probably the nicest fast man in baseball. Nicknamed The Hulk ("berg" means "mountain" in Norwegian). He used those three years on the bench to earn a B.A. in history, by the way.

THAT'S NOT ALL

¶Joining the team later will be Wally Gunderson (17, 191 lbs., 6′4″, left/right), who dons a Twins uniform June 8th, the day after he graduates from West High in Minneapolis. The Twins have saved him a number, 18, and assigned him a locker and paid him a bonus, twelve hundred dollars, which was all he would accept. He's thrilled just to be on the team. A big lanky loose-jointed kid with long wavy blond hair and a goofy grin, he throws a screwball that comes in and up, a slider that suddenly jumps, a curve that drops off the table, and a stinkball that hangs in the air so long some batters swing twice. You don't expect so much junk from an Eagle Scout, but Wally's got one more: a fastball that decelerates rapidly halfway to the plate—a braking pitch. Some he learned from his dad and the rest he invented for a Science Fair project. "Pitching is physics, that's all," he says, looking down at his size-13 shoes, uneasy at all the acclaim.

Detroit and St. Louis offered the lad millions in cash, land, jewelry, servants, tax abatements, but he wasn't listening. "I want to play my ball where my roots are," he says quietly.

Twinsville wasn't one bit surprised. Personal character and loyalty and dedication are what got us where we are right now, and that's on top. We're No. 1. We knew it first and now you know it, too. You thought we were quiet and modest in the Midwest but that's because you're dumb, as dumb as a stump, dumber than dirt.

You're so dumb you don't know that we're on top and you're below. Our team wins and your team loses; we need your team to amuse us. Minnesota soybeans, corn, and barley; we're the best, so beat it, Charley, or we'll shell ya like a pea pod, dunk ya like a doughnut—sure be nice when the game's over, won't it—take ya to the cleaners for a brand-new hairdo. We can beat ya anytime we care to. Shave and a haircut, two bits.

—GARRISON KEILLOR

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"We're running out of adjectives to describe our situation. We had crisis, then we went to chaos, now what do we call this?" said Nicaraguan economist Francisco Mayorga, who holds a doctorate from Yale.—*Washington Post.*

At Harvard they'd call it a noun.

MEMPHIS

ON Friday, after Beverly dropped the children off at her former husband's place for the weekend, she went dancing at the Paradise Club in Paducah with a man she had met at the nature extravaganza at Land Between the Lakes. Since her divorce she had not been out much, but she enjoyed dancing, and her date was a good dancer. She hadn't expected that, because he was shy and seemed more at home with his hogs than with people.

Emerging from the rest room, Beverly suddenly ran into her ex-husband, Joe. For a confused moment she almost didn't recognize him, out of context. He was with a tall, skinny woman in jeans and a fringed cowboy shirt. Joe looked sexy, in a black T-shirt with the sleeves ripped out to show his muscles, but the woman wasn't pretty. She looked bossy and hard.

"Where are the kids?" Beverly shouted at Joe above the music.

"At Mama's. They're all right. Hey, Beverly, this is Janet."

"I'm going over there and get them right now," Beverly said, ignoring Janet.

"Don't be silly, Bev. They're having a good time. Mama fixed up a playroom for them."

"Maybe next week I'll just take them straight to her house. We'll bypass you altogether. Eliminate the middleman." Beverly was a little drunk.

"For Christ's sake."

"This goes on your record," she warned him. "I'm keeping a list."

Janet was touching his elbow possessively, and then the man Beverly had come with showed up with beer mugs in his fists. "Is there something I should know?" he said.

BEVERLY and Joe had separated the year before, just after Easter, and over the summer they tried unsuccessfully to get back together for the sake of the children. A few times after the divorce became final, Beverly spent the night with Joe, but each time she felt it was a mistake. It felt adulterous. A little thing, a quirky habit—like the way he kept the glass coffeepot simmering on the stove—could make her realize they shouldn't see each other. Coffee turned bitter when it was left simmering like that.

Joe never wanted to probe anything very deeply. He accepted things, even her request for a divorce, without asking questions. Beverly could never tell if that meant he was calm and steady or dangerously lacking in curiosity. In the last months they lived together, she had begun to feel that her mind was crammed with useless information, like a landfill, and there wasn't space deep down in her to move around in, to explore what was there. She didn't trust her intelligence anymore. She couldn't repeat the simplest thing she heard on the news and have it make sense to anyone. She would read a column in the newspaper—about something important, like taxes or the death penalty—but be unable to remember what she had read. She felt she had strong ideas and meaningful thoughts, but often when she tried to reach for one she couldn't find it. It was terrifying.

Whenever she tried to explain this feeling to Joe, he just said she expected too much of herself. He didn't expect enough of himself, though, and now she felt that the divorce hadn't affected him deeply enough to change him at all. She was disappointed. He should have gone through a major new phase, especially after what had happened to his friend Chubby Jones, one of his fishing buddies. Chubby burned to death in his pickup truck. One night soon after the divorce became final, Joe woke Beverly up with his pounding on the kitchen door. Frightened, and still not used to being alone with the children, she cracked the venetian blind, one hand on the telephone. Then she recognized the silhouette of Joe's truck in the driveway.

"I didn't want to scare you by using the key," he said when she opened the door. She was furious: he might have woken up the children.

It hadn't occurred to her that he still had a key. Joe was shaking, and when he came inside he flopped down at the kitchen table, automatically choosing his usual place facing the door. In the eerie glow from the fluorescent light above the kitchen sink, he told her about Chubby. Nervously spinning the lazy Susan, Joe groped for words, mostly repeating in disbelief the awful facts. Beverly had never seen him in such a state of shock. His news seemed to cancel out their divorce, as though it were only a trivial fit they had had.

"We were at the Blue Horse Tavern," he said. "Chubby was going on about some shit at work and he had it in his head he was going to quit and go off and live like a hermit and let Donna and the kids do without. You couldn't argue with him when he got like that—a little too friendly with Jack Daniel's. When he went out to his truck we followed him. We were going to follow him home to see he didn't have a wreck, but then he passed out right there in his truck and so we left him there in the parking lot to sleep it off." Joe buried his head in his hands and started to cry. "We thought we were doing the best thing," he said.

Beverly stood behind him and draped her arms over his shoulders, holding him while he cried.

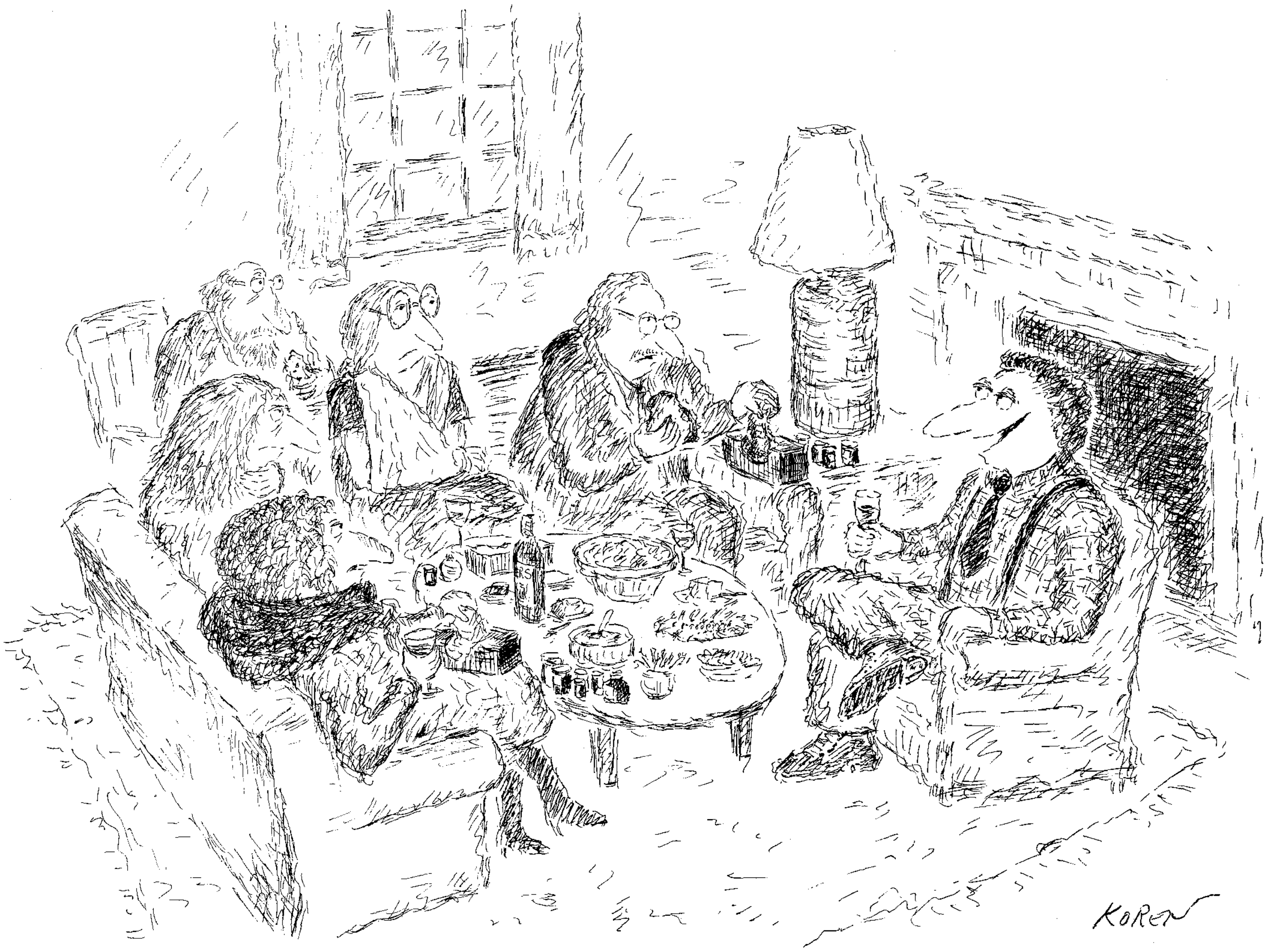
Chubby's cigarette must have dropped on the floor, Joe explained as she rubbed his neck and shoulders. The truck had caught fire some time after the bar closed. A passing driver reported the fire, but the rescue squad arrived too late.

"I went over there," Joe said. "That's where I just came from. It was all dark, and the parking lot was empty, except for his truck, right where we left it. It was all black and hollow. It looked like something from Northern Ireland."

He kept twirling the lazy Susan, watching the grape jelly, the sugar bowl, the honey bear, the salt and pepper shakers go by.

"Come on," Beverly said after a while. She led him to the bedroom. "You need some sleep."

AFTER that, Joe didn't say much about his friend. He seemed to get over Chubby's death, as a child would forget some disappointment. It was sad, he said. Beverly felt so many people were like Joe—half conscious, being pulled along by thoughtless impulses and notions, as if their lives were no more than a load of freight hurtling along on the interstate. Even her mother was like that. After Beverly's father died, her mother became devoted to "The PTL Club" on television. Beverly knew her father would have argued her out of such an obsession when he was alive. Her mother had two loves now: "The PTL Club" and Kenny Rogers. She kept a scrapbook on Kenny Rogers and



"*I never get sick.*"

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she owned all his albums, including the ones that had come out on CD. She still believed fervently in Jim and Tammy Bakker, even after all the fuss. They reminded her of Christmas elves, she told Beverly recently.

"Christmas elves!" Beverly repeated in disgust. "They're the biggest phonies I ever saw."

"Do you think you're better than everybody else, Beverly?" her mother said, offended. "That's what ruined your marriage. I can't get over how you've mistreated poor Joe. You're always judging everybody."

That hurt, but there was some truth in it. She was like her father, who had been a plainspoken man. He didn't like for the facts to be dressed up. He could spot fakes as easily as he noticed jimsonweed in the cornfield. Her mother's remark made her start thinking about her father in a new way. He died ten years ago, when Beverly was pregnant with Shayla, her oldest child. She remembered his unvarying routines. He got up at sunup, ate the same breakfast day in and day out, never went anywhere. In the spring, he set out tobacco plants, and as they matured he suckered them, then stripped them, cured them, and hauled them to auction. She remembered him burning the tobacco beds—the pungent smell, the threat of wind. She used to think his life was dull, but now she had started thinking about those routines as beliefs. She compared them to the routines in her life with Joe: her CNN news fix, telephoning customers at work and entering orders on the computer, the couple of six-packs she and Joe used to drink every evening, Shayla's tap lessons, Joe's basketball night, family night at the sports club. Then she remembered her father running the combine over his wheat fields, wheeling that giant machine around expertly, much the same way Joe handled a motorcycle.

When Tammy, the youngest, was born, Joe was not around. He had gone out to Pennyrile Forest with Jimmy Stone to play war games. Two teams of guys spent three days stalking each other with pretend bullets, trying to make believe they were in the jungle. In rush-hour traffic, Beverly drove herself to the hospital, and the pains caused her to pull over onto the shoulder several times. Joe had taken the childbirth lessons with her and was supposed to be there, participating, helping her with the breathing rhythms. A man would find it easier to go to war than to be around a woman in labor, she told her roommate in the hospital. When Tammy was finally born, Beverly felt that anger had propelled the baby out of her.

But when Joe showed up at the hospital, grinning a moon-pie grin, he gazed into her eyes, running one of her curls through his fingers. "I want to check out that maternal glow of yours," he said, and she felt trapped by desire, even in her condition. For her birthday once, he had given her a satin teddy and "fantasy slippers" with pink marabou feathers, whatever those were. He told the children that the feathers came from the marabou bird, a cross between a caribou and a marigold.

On Friday afternoon after work the week following the Paradise Club incident, Beverly picked up Shayla from her tap lesson and Kerry and Tammy from day-care. She drove them to Joe's house, eight blocks from where she lived.

From the back seat Shayla said, "I don't want to go to the dentist tomorrow. When Daddy has to wait for me, he disappears for about *two hours*. He can't stand to wait."

Glancing in the rearview mirror at Shayla, Beverly said, "You tell your daddy to set himself down and read a magazine if he knows what's good for him."

"Daddy said you were trying to get rid of us," Kerry said.

"That's not true! Don't you let him talk mean about me. He can't get away with that."

"He said he'd take us to the lake," Kerry said. Kerry was six, and snaggletoothed. His teeth were coming in crooked—more good news for the dentist.

Joe's motorcycle and three-wheeler were hogging the driveway, so Beverly pulled up to the curb. His house was nice—a brick ranch he rented from his parents, who lived across town. The kids liked having two houses—they had more rooms, more toys.

"Give me some sugar," Beverly said to Tammy, as she unbuckled the child's seat belt. Tammy smeared her moist little face against Beverly's. "Y'all be good now," Beverly said. She hated leaving them.

The kids raced up the sidewalk, their backpacks bobbing against their legs. She saw Joe open the door and greet them. Then he waved at her to come inside. "Come on in and have a beer!" he called loudly. He held his beer can up like the Statue of Liberty's torch. He had on a cowboy hat with a large feather plastered on the side of the crown. His tan had deepened. She felt her stomach do a flip and her mind fuzz over like mold on fruit. I'm an idiot, she told herself.

She shut off the engine and pocketed the keys. Joe's fat black cat accompanied her up the sidewalk. "You need to put that cat on a diet," Beverly said to Joe when he opened the door for her. "He looks like a little hippo in black pajamas."

"He goes to the no-frills mouse market and loads up," Joe said, grinning. "I can't stop him."

The kids were already in the kitchen, investigating the refrigerator—one of those with beverage dispensers on the outside. Joe kept the dispensers filled with surprises—chocolate milk or Juicy Juice.

"Daddy, can I microwave a burrito?" asked Shayla.

"No, not now. We'll go to the mall after-while, so you don't want to ruin your supper now."

"Oh, boy. That means Chi-Chi's."

The kids disappeared into the family room in the basement, carrying Cokes and bags of cookies and potato chips. Joe opened a beer for Beverly. She was sitting on the couch smoking a cigarette and staring blankly at his pocket-knife collection in a case on the coffee table when Joe came forward and stood over her. Something was wrong.

"I'm being transferred," he said, handing her the beer. "I'm moving to Columbia, South Carolina."

FEAR & FAME

Half an hour to dress: wide rubber hip boots,
gauntlets to the elbow, a plastic helmet
like a knight's but with a little glass window
that kept steaming over, and a respirator
to save my smoke-stained lungs. I would descend
step by slow step into the dim world
of the pickling tank and there prepare
the new solutions from the great carboys
of acids lowered to me on ropes—all from a recipe
I shared with nobody and learned from Frank O'Mera
before he went off to the bars on Vernor Highway
to drink himself to death. A gallon of hydrochloric
steaming from the wide glass mouth, a dash
of pale nitric to bubble up, a sulfuric to calm,
metals for sweeteners, cleansers for salts,
until I knew the burning stew was done.
Then to climb back, step by stately step, the adventurer
returned to the ordinary blinking lights
of the swing shift at Feinberg and Breslin's
First-Rate Plumbing and Plating with a message
from the kingdom of fire. Oddly enough,
no one welcomed me back, and I'd stand
fully armored as the downpour of cold water
rained down on me and the smoking traces puddled
at my feet like so much milk and melting snow.
Then to disrobe down to my work pants and shirt,
my black street shoes and white cotton socks,
to reassume my nickname, strap on my Bulova,
screw back my wedding ring, and with tap water
gargle away the bitterness as best I could.
For fifteen minutes or more I'd sit quietly
off to the side of the world as the women
polished the tubes and fixtures to a burnished purity
hung like Christmas ornaments on the racks
pulled steadily toward the tanks I'd cooked.
Ahead lay the second cigarette, held in a shaking hand,
as I took into myself the sickening heat to quell heat,
a lunch of two Genoa-salami sandwiches and Swiss cheese
on heavy peasant bread baked by my Aunt Tsipi,
and a third cigarette to kill the taste of the others.
Then to arise and dress again in the costume
of my trade for the second time that night, stiffened
by the knowledge that to descend and rise up
from the other world merely once in eight hours is half
what it takes to be known among women and men.

—Philip Levine

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"If you had an account here, it would be a different story."

She sat very still, her cigarette poised in midair like a freeze-frame scene on the VCR. A purple stain shaped like a flower was on the arm of the couch. His rug was the nubby kind made of tiny loops, and one patch had unravelled. She could hear the blip-blip-crash of video games downstairs.

"What?" she said.

"I'm being transferred."

"I heard you. I'm just having trouble getting it from my ears to my mind." She was stunned. She had never imagined Joe anywhere except right here in town.

"The plant's got an opening there, and I'll make a whole lot more."

"But you don't have to go. They can't make you go."

"It's an opportunity. I can't turn it down."

"But it's too far away."

He rested his hand lightly on her shoulder. "I'll want to have the kids on vacations—and all summer."

"Well, tough! You expect me to send them on an airplane all that way?"

"You'll have to make some adjustments," he said calmly, taking his hand away and sitting down beside her on the couch.

"I couldn't stay away from them that long," she said. "And Columbia, South Carolina? It's not interesting. They'll hate it. Nothing's there."

"You don't know that."

"What would you do with them? You can never think of what to do with them when you've got them, so you stuff them with junk or dump them at your mother's." Beverly felt confused, unable to call upon the right argument. Her words came out wrong, more accusing than she meant.

He was saying, "Why don't you move there, too? What would keep you here?"

"Don't make me laugh." Her beer can was sweating, making cold circles on her bare leg.

He scrunched his empty can into a wad, as if he had made a decision. "We could buy a house and get back together," he said. "I didn't like seeing you on that dance floor the other night with that guy. I didn't like you seeing me with Janet. I didn't like being there with Janet. I suddenly wondered why we had to be there in those circumstances, when we could have been home with the kids."

"It would be the same old thing," Beverly said impatiently. "My God, Joe, think of what you'd do with three kids for three whole months."

"I think I know how to handle them. It's you I never could handle." He threw the can across the room straight into the kitchen wastebasket. "We've got a history together," he said. "That's the positive way to look at it." Playfully he cocked his hat and gave her a wacky, ironic look—his imitation of Jim-Boy McCoy, a used-furniture dealer in a local commercial.

"You take the cake," she said, with a little burst of laughter. But she couldn't see herself moving to Columbia, South Carolina, of all places. It would be too hot, and the people would talk in drippy, soft drawls. The kids would hate it.

After she left Joe's, she went to Tan Your Hide, the tanning salon and fitness shop that Jolene Walker managed. She worked late on Fridays. Beverly and Jolene had been friends since junior high, when they entered calves in the fair together.

"I need a quick hit before I go home," Beverly said to Jolene.

"Use No. 2—No. 1's acting funny and I'm scared to use it. I think the light's about to blow."

In the changing room, Jolene listened sympathetically to Beverly's news about Joe. "Columbia, South Carolina!" Jolene cried. "What will I do with myself if you go off?"

"A few years ago I'd have jumped at the chance to move someplace like South Carolina, but it wouldn't be right to go now unless I love him," Beverly said. As she pulled on her bathing suit, she said, "Damn! I couldn't bear to be away from the kids for a whole summer!"

"Maybe he can't, either," said Jolene, skating the dressing-room curtain along its track. "Listen, do you want to ride to Memphis with me tomorrow? I've got to pick up some merchandise coming in from California—a new line of sweatsuits. It's cheaper to go pick it up at the airport than have it flown up here by commuter."

"Yeah, sure. I don't know what else to do with my weekends. Without the kids, my weekends are like black holes." She laughed. "Big empty places you get sucked into." She made a comic sucking noise that made Jolene smile.

"We could go hear some of that good Memphis blues on Beale Street," Jolene suggested.

"Let me think about it while I work on my tan. I want to get in here and do some meditating."

"Are you still into that? That reminds me of my ex-husband and that born-again shit he used to throw at me."

"It's not the same thing," Beverly said, getting into the sunshine coffin, as she called it. "Beam me up," she said. She liked to meditate while she tanned. It was private, and she felt she was accomplishing something at the same time. In meditation, the jumbled thoughts in her mind were supposed to settle down, like the drifting snowflakes in a paperweight.

Jolene adjusted the machine and clicked the dial. "Ready for takeoff?"

"As ready as I'll ever be," said Beverly, her eyes hidden under big cotton pads. She was ruining her eyes at work, staring at a video display terminal all day. Under the sunlamp, she imagined her skin broiling as she slowly moved through space like that spaceship in "2001" that revolved like a rotisserie.

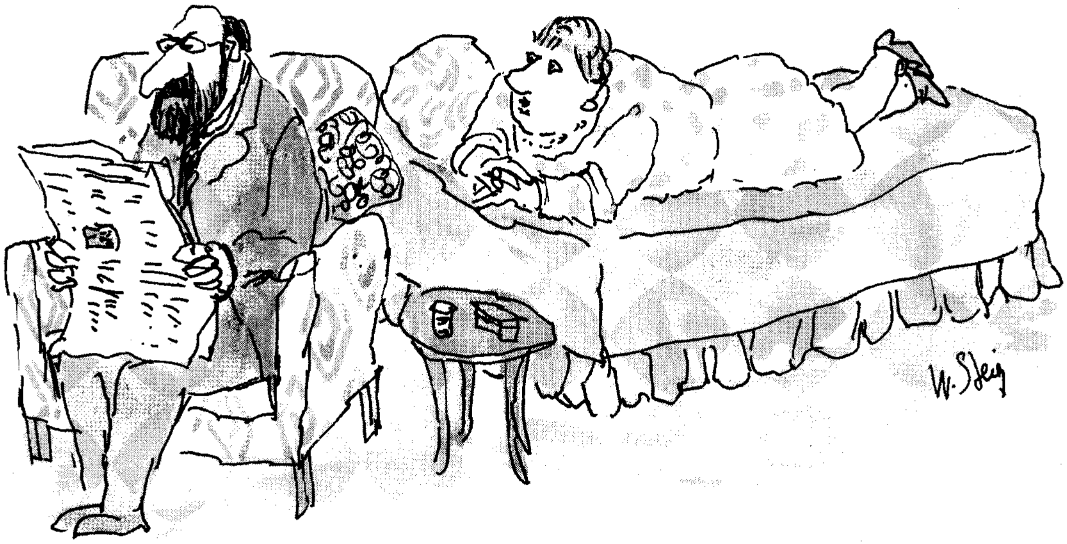
Scenes floated before her eyes. Helping shell purple-hull peas one hot afternoon when she was about seventeen; her mother shelling peas methodically, with the sound of Beverly's father in the bedroom coughing and spitting into a newspaper-lined cigar box. Her stomach swelled out with Kerry, and a night then when Joe didn't come back from a motorcycle trip and she was so scared she could feel the fear deep inside, right into the baby's heartbeat. Her father riding a horse along a fencerow. In the future, she thought, people would get in a contraption something like the sunshine coffin and go time-travelling, unbounded by time and space or custody arrangements.

One winter afternoon two years ago: a time with Joe and the kids. Tammy was still nursing and Kerry had just lost a tooth. Shayla was reading a Nancy Drew paperback, which was advanced for her age, but Shayla was smart. They were on the living-room floor together, on a quilt, having a picnic and watching "Chitty Chitty Bang Bang." Beverly felt happy. That day, Kerry learned a new word—"soldier." She teased him. "You're my little soldier," she said. Sometimes she thought she could make moments like that happen again, but when she tried it felt forced. They would be at the supper table and she'd give the children hot dogs or tacos—something they liked—and she would say, "This is such fun!" and they would look at her funny.

Joe used to say to anyone new they met, "I've got a blue collar and a red neck and a white ass. I'm the most patriotic son of a bitch on two legs!" She and Joe were happy when they started out together. After work, they would sit on the patio with the stereo turned up loud and drink beer and pitch horseshoes while the steak grilled. On weekends, they used to take an ice chest over to the lake and have cookouts with friends and go fishing. When Joe got a motorcycle, they rode together every weekend. She loved the feeling, her feet clenching the foot pegs and her hands gripping the seat strap for dear life. She loved the wind burning her face, her hair flying out from under the helmet, her chin boring into Joe's back as he tore around curves. Their friends all worked at the new plants, making more money than they ever had before. Everyone they knew had a yard strewn with vehicles: motorcycles, three-wheelers, sporty cars, pickups. One year, people started buying horses. It was just a thing people were into suddenly, so that they could ride in the annual harvest parade in Fenway. Joe and Beverly never got around to having a horse, though. It seemed too much trouble after the kids came along. Most of the couples they knew then drank a lot and argued and had fights, but they had a good time. Now marriages were splitting up. Beverly could name five divorces or separations in her crowd. It seemed no one knew why this was happening. Everybody blamed it on statistics: half of all mar-

PARDON
MY
APPEARANCE
DURING
RENOVATION

riages nowadays ended in divorce. It was a fact, like traffic jams—just one of those things you had to put up with in modern life. But Beverly thought money was to blame: greed made people purely stupid. She admired Jolene for the simple, clear way she divorced Steve and made her own way without his help. Steve had gone on a motorcycle trip alone and when he came back he was a changed man. He had joined a bunch of born-again bikers he met at a campground in Wyoming, and afterward he tried to convert everybody he knew. Jolene refused to take the Lord as her personal saviour. "It's amazing how much spite Steve has in him," Jolene told Beverly after she moved out. "I don't even care anymore."



"Harvey, talk to me. How are the Knicks making out?"

• •

It made Beverly angry not to know why she didn't want Joe to go to South Carolina. Did he just want her to come to South Carolina for convenience, for the sake of the children? Sometimes she felt they were both stalled at a crossroads, each thinking the other had the right-of-way. But now his foot was on the gas.

Jolene was saying, "Get out of there before you cook!"

Beverly removed the cotton pads from her eyes and squinted at the bright light.

Jolene said, "Look at this place on my arm. It looks just like one of those skin cancers in my medical guide." She pointed to an almost invisible spot in the crook of her arm. Jolene owned a photographer's magnifying glass a former boyfriend had given her, and she often looked at her moles with it. Under the glass, tiny moles looked hideous and black, with red edges.

Beverly, who was impatient with Jolene's hypochondria, said, "I wouldn't worry about it unless I could see it with my bare naked eyes."

"I think I should stop tanning," Jolene said.

THE sky along the western horizon was a flat yellow ribbon with the tree line pasted against it. After the farmland ran out, Beverly and Jolene passed small white houses in disrepair, junky little clusters of businesses, a K mart, then a Wal-Mart. As Jolene drove along, Beverly thought about Joe's vehicles. It had never occurred to her before that he had all those wheels and hardly went anywhere except places around home. But now he was actually leaving.

She was full of nervous energy. She kept twisting the radio dial, trying to find a good driving song. She wished the radio would play "Radar Love," a great driving song. All she could get was country stations and gospel stations. After a commercial for a gigantic flea market, with dealers coming from thirty states, the announcer said, "Elvis would be there—if he could." Jolene hit the horn. "Elvis, we're on our way, baby!"

"There's this record store I want to go to if we have time," said Jolene. "It's got all these old rock songs—everything you could name, going way back to the very beginning."

"Would they have 'Your Feet's Too Big,' by Fats Waller? Joe used to sing that."

"Honey, they've got *everything*. Why, I bet they've got a tape of Fats Waller humming to himself in the outhouse." They laughed, and Jolene said, "You're still stuck on Joe."

"I can't let all three kids go to South Carolina on one airplane! If it crashed, I'd lose all three of them at once."

"Oh, don't think that way!"

Beverly sighed. "I can't get used to not having a child pulling on my leg every minute. But I guess I should get out and have a good time."

"Now you're talking."

"Maybe if he moves to South Carolina, we can make a clean break. Besides, I better not fight him, or he might kidnap them."

"Do you really think that?" said Jolene, astonished.

"I don't know. You hear about cases like that." Beverly changed the radio station again.

"I can't stand to see you tear yourself up this way," said Jolene, giving Beverly's arm an affectionate pat.

Beverly laughed. "Hey, look at that bumper sticker—'A WOMAN'S PLACE IS IN THE MALL.' "

"All *right!*" said Jolene.

They drove into Memphis on Route 51, past self-service gas stations in corrugated-tin buildings with country hams hanging in the windows. Beverly noticed a memorial garden between two cornfields, with an immense white statue of Jesus rising up from the center like the Great White Shark surfacing. They passed a display of black-velvet paintings beside a van, a ceramic-grassware place, a fireworks stand, motels, package stores, auto body shops, car dealers that sold trampolines and satellite dishes. A stretch of faded old wooden buildings—grim and gray and ramshackle—followed, then factories, scrap-metal places, junk yards, ancient grills and poolrooms, small houses so old the wood looked rotten. Then came the housing projects. It was all so familiar. Beverly remembered countless trips to Memphis when her father was in the hospital here, dying of cancer. The Memphis specialists prolonged his misery, and Beverly's mother said afterward, "We should have set him out in the corncrib and let him go naturally, the way he wanted to go."

Beverly and Jolene ate at a Cajun restaurant that night, and later they walked down Beale Street, which had been spruced up and wasn't as scary as it used to be, Beverly thought. The sidewalks were crowded with tourists and policemen. At a blues club, she and Jolene giggled like young girls out looking for love. Beverly had been afraid Memphis would make her sad, but after three strawberry Daiquiris she was feeling good. Jolene had a headache and was drinking ginger ale, which turned out to be Sprite with a splash of Coke—what bartenders do when they're out of ginger ale, Beverly told her. She didn't know how she knew that. Probably Joe had told her once. He used to tend bar. Forget Joe, she thought. She needed to loosen up a little. The kids had been saying she was like either Kate or Allie on that TV show—whichever was the uptight one, she couldn't remember.

The band was great—two white guys and two black guys. Between numbers, they joked with the waitress, a middle-aged woman with spiked red hair, and shoulder pads that fit cockeyed. The white lead singer clowned around with a cardboard standup figure of Marilyn Monroe in her white dress from "The Seven Year Itch." He spun her about the dance floor, sneaking his hand onto Marilyn's crotch where her dress had flown up. He played her like a guitar. A pretty black woman in a dark leather skirt and polka-dotted jacket danced with a slim young black guy with a brush haircut. Beverly wondered how he got his hair to stick up like that. Earlier, when she and Jolene stopped at a Walgreen's for shampoo, Beverly had noticed a whole department of hair-care products for blacks. There was a row of large jugs of hair conditioner, like the jugs motor oil and bleach came in.

Jolene switched from fake ginger ale to Fuzzy Navels, which she had been drinking earlier at the Cajun restaurant. She blamed her headache on Cajun frog legs but said she felt better now. "I'm having a blast," she said, drumming her slender fingers on the table in time with the band.

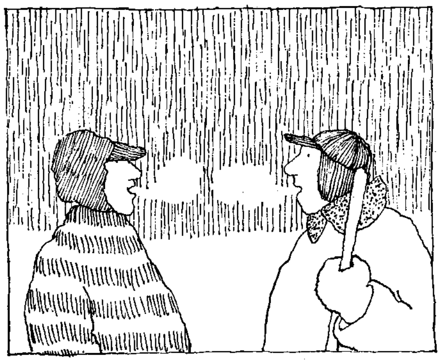
"I'm having a blast, too," Beverly said, just as an enormous man with tattoos of outer-space monsters on his arms asked Jolene to dance.

"No way!" Jolene said, cringing. On his forearm was an astounding picture of a creature that reminded Beverly of one of Kerry's dinosaur toys.

"That guy's really off the moon," Jolene said as the man left.

During the break, the waitress passed by with a plastic bucket, collecting tips for the band. Beverly thought of an old song, "Bucket's Got a Hole in It." Her grandmother's kitchen slop bucket with its step pedal. Going to hell in a bucket. Kick the bucket. She felt giddy.

"That boy's here every night," the waitress said, with a turn of her head toward the tattooed guy, who had approached another pair of women. "I feel so sorry for him. His brother killed himself and his mother's in jail for drugs. He never could hold a job. He's trouble waiting for a ride."



"Does the band know 'Your Feet's Too Big'?" Beverly asked the waitress, who was stuffing requests into her pocket.

"Is that a song, or are you talking about my big hoofs?" the woman said, with a wide, teasing grin.

On the way back to their motel on Elvis Presley Boulevard, Jolene got on a one-way street and ended up in downtown Memphis, where the tall buildings were. Beverly would hate to work so high up in the air. Her cousin had a job down here in life insurance and said she never knew what the weather was. Beverly wondered if South Carolina had any skyscrapers.

"There's the famous Peabody Hotel," Jolene was saying. "The hotel with the ducks."

"Ducks?"

"At that hotel it's ducks galore," explained Jolene. "The towels and stationery and stuff. I know a girl who stayed there, and she said a bunch of ducks come down every morning on the elevator and go splash in the fountain. It's a tourist attraction."

"The kids would like that. That's what I should be doing down here—

OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL

Perhaps in the dead of some different night,
Staring into an ocean of as yet unnamed stars
About whose myriad formations we can only surmise;
Perhaps in the heat of a meridional afternoon,
Sprawled beside a water hole in the lush shade
Afforded by primitive plants, lazily swatting flies;
Or perhaps while smeared with grease from the carcass,
Having gorged at long last on a feast of raw flesh,
Listening contentedly to the sounds of digestion—
Into what immense mind on what terrible occasion
Did that thought, that first idea, finally arrive?
Salve homo, I see you there, struck by your sapience,
Stunned by the source of all bitterness and joy,
Conceiving behind wild eyes and a thickset brow
The origin of so much beauty, of so many misdeeds,
Of every identical dread: the origin of the species.
Somewhere great clouds of insects must be swarming,
For you hear their furious humming fill the air;
Somewhere a taloned beast must be tearing its prey,
For you scent the sweet odor of blood on the breeze.
You with the hairy belly, with the heavy jaw ajar,
I see you there, your mind leaping to conclusions:
The cold sweat bursts forth and you twirl a twig,
Idly, abstractedly, envisioning so many things
(Stones piled on each other, bones heaped in a pit),
Imagining every end, getting it all in an instant,
The dissolution of that time and place, of you,
Its mockeries and implication.

—George Bradley

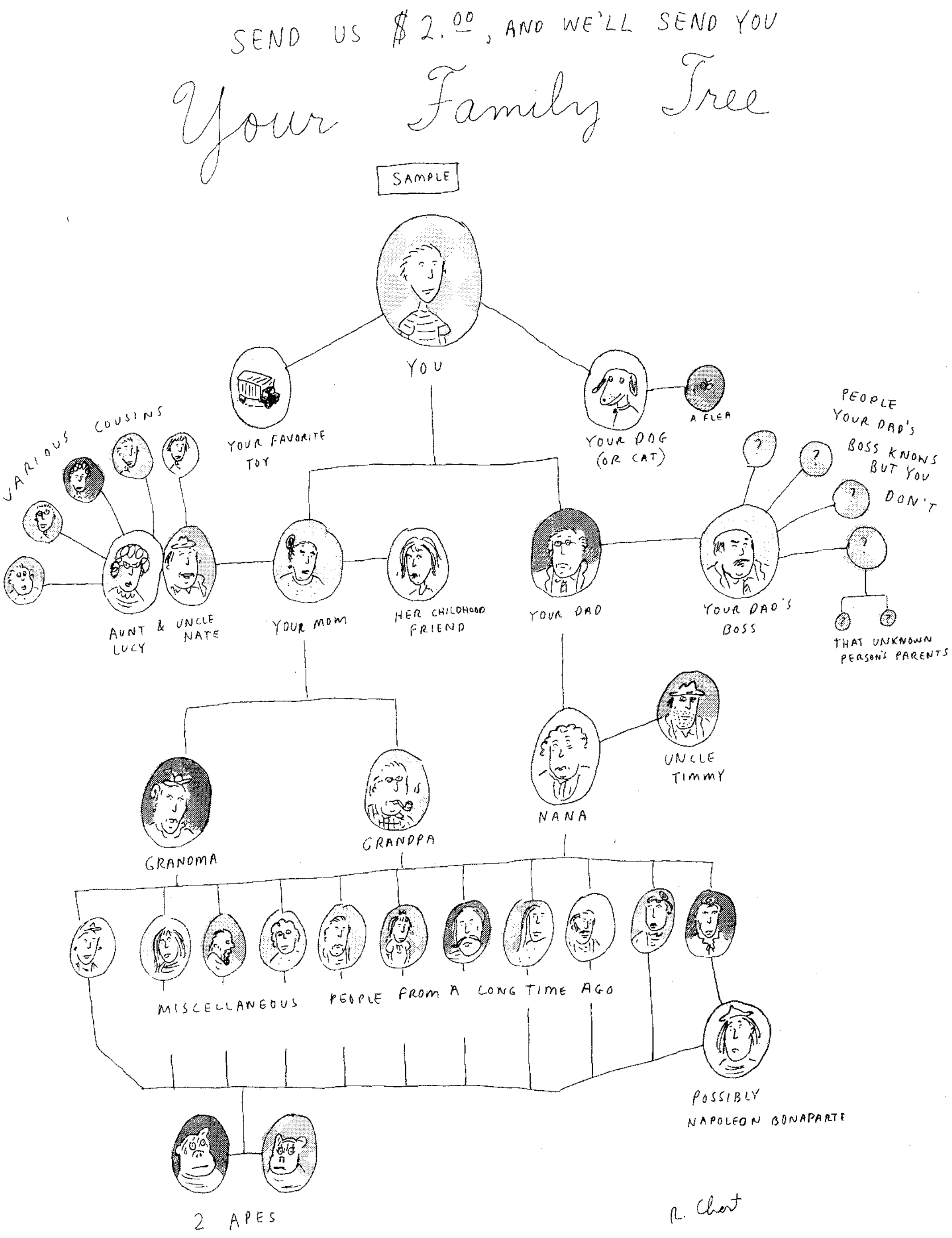
* *

taking the kids someplace, not getting smashed like this." Beverly felt disembodied, her voice coming from the glove compartment.

"Everything is *should* with you, Beverly!" Jolene said, making a right on red.

Jolene didn't mean to sound preachy, Beverly thought. Fuzzy Navels did that to her. If Beverly mentioned what she was feeling about Joe, Jolene would probably say that Joe just looked good right now compared to some of the weirdos you meet out in the world.

Down the boulevard, the lights spread out extravagantly. As Beverly watched, a green neon light winked off, and the whole scene seemed to shift slightly. It was like making a correction on the V.D.T. at work—the way the screen readjusted all the lines and spacing to accommodate the change. Far away, a red light was inching across the black sky. She thought about riding behind Joe on his Harley, flashing through the dark on a summer night, cool in the wind, with sparkling, mysterious lights flickering off the lake.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YOUR DOG (OR CAT)
A FLEA
PEOPLE YOUR DAD'S BOSS KNOWS BUT YOU DON'T
VARIOUS COUSINS
AUNT LUCY
& UNCLE NATE
YOUR MOM
HER CHILDHOOD FRIEND
YOUR DAD
YOUR DAD'S BOSS
?
THAT UNKNOWN PERSON'S PARENTS
UNCLE TIMMY
NANA
GRANDMA
GRANDPA
MISCELLANEOUS PEOPLE FROM A LONG TIME AGO
POSSIBLY NAPOLEON BONAPARTE
2 APES
R. Chast

THE music from the night before was still playing in Beverly's head when she got home Sunday afternoon. It was exhilarating, like something she knew well but hadn't thought of in years. It came soaring up through her with a luxurious clarity. She could still hear the henna-haired waitress saying, "Are you talking about my big hoofs?" Beverly's dad used to say, "Oh, my aching dogs!" She clicked "Radar Love" into the cassette-player and turned the volume up loud. She couldn't help dancing to its hard frenzy. "Radar Love" made her think of Joe's Fuzzbuster, which he bought after he got two speeding tickets in one month. One time he told the children his razor was a Fuzzbuster. Speeding, she whirled joyfully through the hall.

The song was only halfway through when Joe arrived with the kids—unexpectedly early. Kerry ejected the tape. Sports voices hollered out from the TV. Whenever the kids returned from their weekends, they plowed through the place, unloading their belongings and taking inventory of what they had left behind. Tammy immediately flung all her toys out of her toybox, looking for a rag doll she had been worried about. Joe said she had cried about it yesterday.

"How was the dentist?" Beverly asked Shayla.

"I don't want to talk about it," said Shayla, who was dumping dirty clothes on top of the washing machine.

"Forty bucks for one stupid filling," Joe said.

Joe had such a loud voice that he always came on too strong. Beverly remembered with embarrassment the time he called up Sears and terrorized the poor clerk over a flaw in a sump pump, when it wasn't the woman's fault. But now he lowered his voice to a quiet, confidential tone and said to Beverly in the kitchen, "Yesterday at the lake Shayla said she wished you were there with us, and I tried to explain to her how you had to have some time for yourself, how you said you had to have your own space and find *yourself*—you know, all that crap on TV. She seemed to get a little depressed, and I thought maybe I'd said the wrong thing, but a little later she said she'd been thinking and she knew what you meant."

"She's smart," Beverly said. Her cheeks were burning. She popped ice cubes out of a tray and began pouring Coke into a glass of ice.

"She gets it honest—she's got smart parents," he said with a grin.

Beverly drank the Coke while it was still foaming. Bubbles burst on her nose. "It's not crap on TV," she said angrily. "How can you say that?"

He looked hurt. She observed the dimple on his chin, the corresponding kink of his hairline above his ear, the way his hat shaded his eyes and deepened their fire. Even if he lived to be a hundred, Joe would still have those seductive eyes. Kerry wandered into the kitchen, dragging a green dinosaur by a hind foot. "We didn't have any corny cakes," he whined. He meant cornflakes.

"Why didn't Daddy get you some?"

After Kerry drifted away, Joe said, "I'm going to South Carolina in a couple of weeks. Check it out and try to find a place to live."

Beverly opened the freezer and took chicken thighs out to thaw, then began clearing dishes to keep from bursting into tears.

"Columbia's real progressive," he said. "Lots of businesses are relocating there. It's a place on the way up."

The foam had settled on her Coke, and she poured some more. She began loading the dishwasher. One of her new non-stick pans already had a scratch.

"How was Memphis?" Joe asked, his hand on the kitchen doorknob.

"Fine," she said. "Jolene had too many Fuzzy Navels."

"That figures."

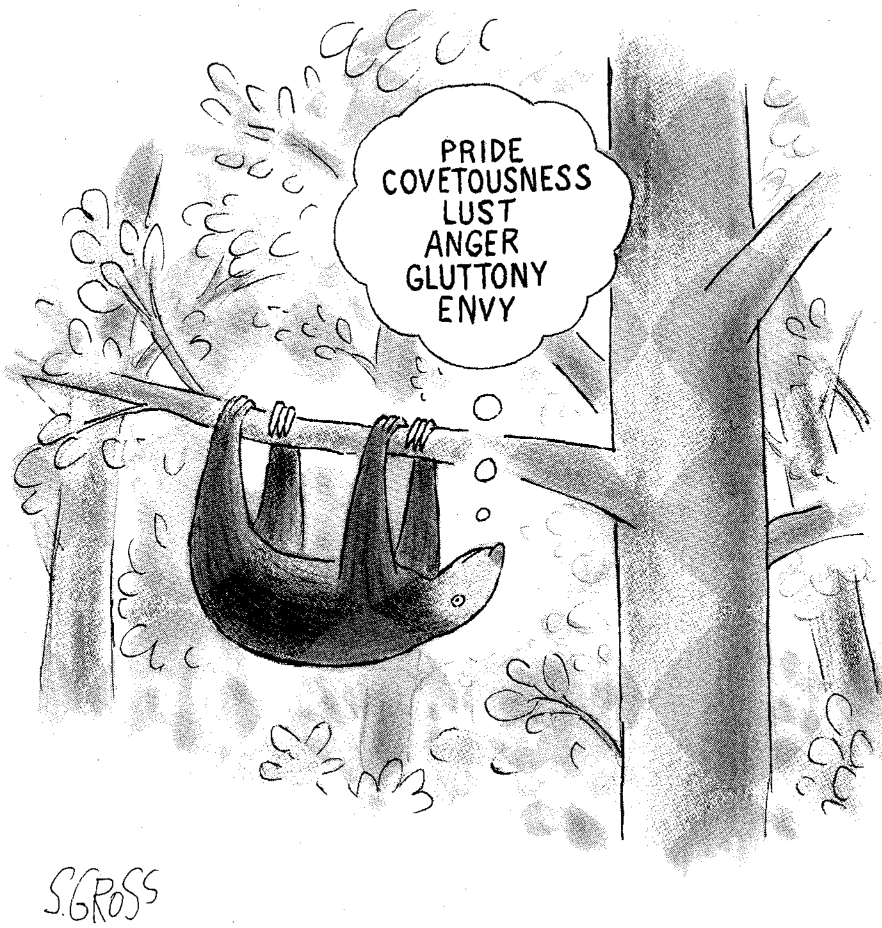
Shayla rushed in then and said, "Daddy, you got to fix that thing in my closet. The door won't close."

"That track at the top? Not again! I don't have time to work on it right now."

"He doesn't live here," Beverly said to Shayla.

"Well, my closet's broke and who's going to fix it?" Shayla threw up her hands and stomped out of the kitchen.

Joe said, "You know, in the future, if we're going to keep this up, we're going to have to learn to carry on a better conversation, because this stinks." He adjusted his hat, setting it firmly on his head. "You're so full of wants you don't know what you want," he said.



Through the glass section of the door she could see him walking to his truck with his hands in his pockets. She had seen him march out the door exactly that way so many times before—whenever he didn't want to hear what was coming next, or when he thought he had had the last word. She hurried out to speak to him, but he was already pulling away, gunning his engine loudly. She watched him disappear, his tail-lights winking briefly at a stop sign. She felt ashamed.

Beverly paused beside the young pin-oak tree at the corner of the driveway. When Joe planted it, there were hardly any trees in the subdivision. All the houses were built within the last ten years and the trees were still spindly. The house just to her left was Mrs. Grim's. She was a widow and kept cats. On the other side, a German police dog in a back-yard pen spent his time barking across Beverly's yard at Mrs. Grim's cats. The man who owned the dog operated a video store, and his wife mysteriously spent several weeks a year out of town. When she was away her husband stayed up all night watching TV, like a child freed from rules. Beverly could see his light on when she got up in the night with the kids. She had never really noticed that the bricks of all three houses were a mottled red and gray, like uniformly splattered paint. There was a row of vertical bricks supporting each window. She stood at the foot of the driveway feeling slightly amazed that she should be stopped in her tracks at this particular time and place.

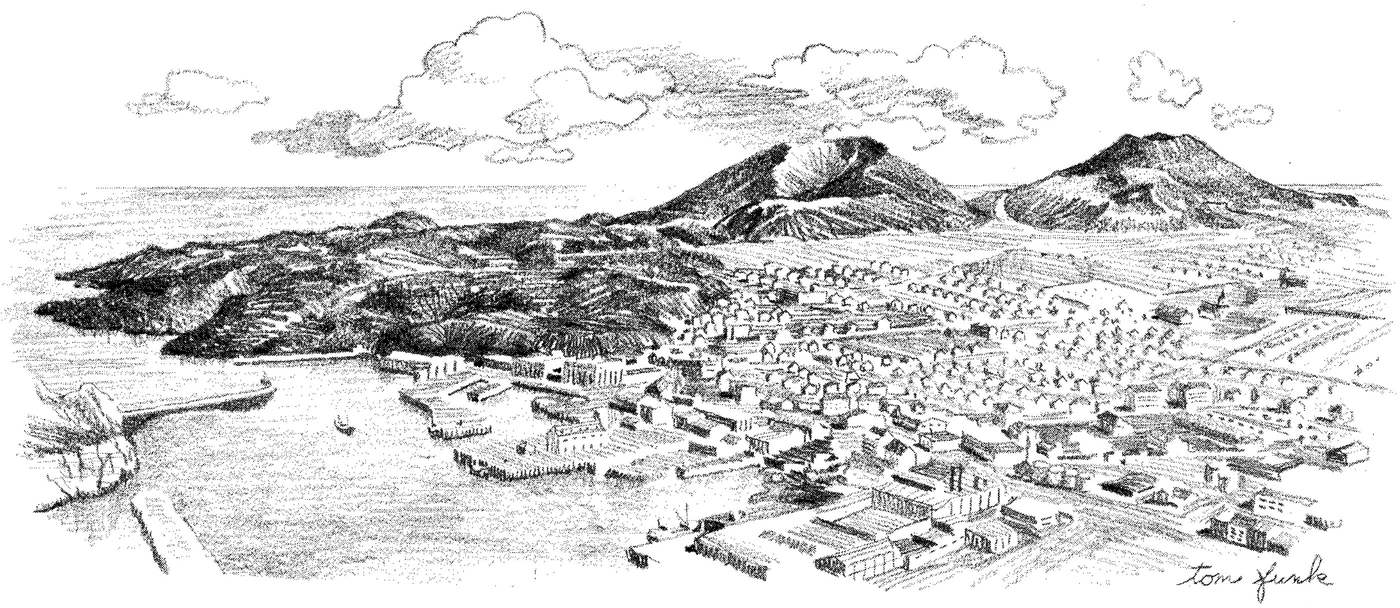
It ought to be so easy to work out what she really wanted. Beverly's parents had stayed married like two dogs locked together in passion, except it wasn't passion. But she and Joe didn't have to do that. Times had changed. Joe could up and move to South Carolina. Beverly and Jolene could hop down to Memphis just for a fun weekend. Who knew what might happen or what anybody would decide to do on any given weekend or at any stage of life?

She brought in yesterday's mail—a car magazine for Joe, a credit-card bill he was supposed to pay, some junk mail. She laid the items for Joe on a kitchen shelf next to the videotape she had borrowed from him and forgotten to return.

—Bobbie Ann Mason

THE CONTROL OF NATURE

COOLING THE LAVA—I



COOLING the lava was Thorbjorn's idea. He meant to stop the lava. That such a feat had not been tried, let alone accomplished, in the known history of the world did not burden Thorbjorn, who had reason to believe it could be done.

His full name is Thorbjorn Sigurgeirsson. If you look for him in Simaskra, the Iceland telephone directory, you look under "Thorbjorn." You look under "Sigurdur" for Sigurdur Jonsson. You look under "Magnus" for Magnus Magnusson. I had occasion recently to call all three of these, and finding them in Simaskra was not for me a simple task. It doesn't matter that Sigurdur is a harbor manager's deputy, or that Magnus is a postal director, or that Thorbjorn is a physicist trained in Copenhagen by Niels Bohr. Like the Prime Minister, like the President—like all people in Iceland—Thorbjorn is known by his first name. Sigurgeir, of course, was his father.

To Thorbjorn's idea skepticism was the primary response. The skeptics included Magnus Magnusson, Sigurdur Jonsson, Valdimar Jonsson, Thorleifur Einarsson, Gudmundur Karlsson, and almost everybody else in Iceland. Red-hot lava—moving with the inexorability of tide—was threatening a town and a harbor on an offshore island. The vent was a nascent volcano. As the entire nation watched on television, a small crew with fire hoses squirted the front of the lava, producing billows of steam. This was in February, 1973. Quickly, the cooling of the lava became a national joke. The people called the action pissa a hraunid, in which "a hraunid" meant "on the lava."

There may even have been smiles in the National Emergency Operation Center, in Reykjavik, where the Civil Defense Council was watching Thorbjorn's experiments. The National Emergency Operation Center has grown since then but is still concentrated around a command-post bomb shelter built as Iceland's cerebral cortex in the event of a nuclear war. The Civil Defense Council had been established in 1962, and was scarcely a year old when—sixty-five miles southeast of the capital—the ocean began to boil. The Council became preoccupied with forces greater than bombs. Red lava appeared in the Atlantic swells and, layer upon layer, emerged as an island that was soon the second largest of a fleet of islands collectively known as Vestmannaeyjar. The fresh lavas of Surtsey, as the new one was called, hissed into the ocean for three and a half years. In the same period, unusual masses of drift ice blockaded various harbors, causing wide destruction; and the charter purpose of the Civil Defense Council was broadened to include acts of God. Behind thick concrete walls and steel anti-radiation doors, in a space where the air can be pressurized to keep anything noxious from seeping in, Iceland directs the war against nature. "War" is the word often used, especially with reference to the campaign begun after the twenty-third of January, 1973, when a fissure suddenly opened in the outskirts of a community of five thousand people and a curtain of lava five hundred feet high and a mile long fountained into the sky above Heimaey, the largest island of Vestmannaeyjar. All these years later, the communication room of the National Emergency Operation Center, in Reykjavik, is decorated with a relief model of Heimaey and eight large photographs, ruddy with violence, made in that place and time, for, notwithstanding the frequency of eruptions in various parts of Iceland and of natural disasters in many forms (sea surges, earthquakes, glacial bursts), Heimaey is the most signal battle ever waged by the Civil Defense.

Heimaey is pronounced "hay may." Vestmannaeyjar is more or less pronounced "vestman air." The town on Heimaey is the only place in the archipelago inhabited by human beings, and it has no special name. It is referred to simply as Vestmannaeyjar or, less frequently, as Heimaey, which means "home island." In area, the home island is so small that it approximates Manhattan south of the Empire State Building. The volume of material that came pouring out on Heimaey in 1973 would be enough to envelop New York's entire financial district, with only the tops of the World Trade Center sticking out like ski huts. The image is not as outlandish as it seems. A few miles west of Manhattan, the high ground of Montclair—of Glen Ridge, Great Notch, and Mountainside—is the product of a similar fissure

"I'd like you to meet Nan and Leo, but I think you already know Nan from back when it was Nan and Ralph."

• •

eruption. In Vestmannaeyjar, the nub of the crisis was simple and economic. Proportionally, Heimaey was more valuable to Iceland than downtown New York is to us. Vestmannaeyjar, with two and a half per cent of Iceland's people, was producing about a twelfth of Iceland's export income. Vestmannaeyjar was a place to catch fish. Iceland's exports were three-quarters fish. As a result of Heimaey's natural protection, it was Iceland's single most important fishing center. Not merely was Heimaey's harbor the best harbor along the three hundred miles of Iceland's south coast; it was the only one. That is why this eruption, as someone said, "just came like a thundering cloud over the whole nation." That is why there was so much alarm when a generally slow and viscous, magisterial lava—dark-shelled by day and a craquelure of red and black at night—began to move not only toward sections of the town but, more important, toward the entrance to the harbor.

The cooling was at first confined to the lava front. Men stood on cold ground before the flowing rock and watered it like a garden. Its Fahrenheit temperature was around two thousand degrees. The water would reduce the heat locally by a factor of four, creating a wall of chilled lava to dam the flow behind. Soon it became apparent that the wall would have to be a great deal thicker than hoses could ever make it from positions ahead of the flow. The lava should be cooled not so much by the edge as by the acre, and that called not only for more pumps but also for the deployment of matériel and personnel up on top of the advancing flow.

It was astonishing to see what an essentially liquid body of rock would carry on its surface. As lava moves, under the air, it develops a skin of glass that is broken and rebroken by the motion of the liquid below, so that it clinks and tinkles, and crackles like a campfire, which, in a fantastic sense, it resembles. In Hawaii, a short while ago, I was close enough to the flowing lava of Kilauea to ladle some out and carry off a new rock, but in Vestmannaeyjar, when I made a recent visit, the eruption had been over for a decade and a half, and, needless to say, no lava was moving. Steam was still rising from the lava field, though, and grew to heavy mist under rain. If you reached down and put a hand on the ground—on loose ash—the new surface felt cool. If you rubbed away as little as a third of an inch, the ground was so hot you had to pull back your hand. The ash was such an effective insulator—not to mention the layers of solidified basalt underneath it—that the interior of the 1973 flow was still molten. During the eruption, when the pumping crews first tried to get up onto the lava they found that a crust as thin as two inches was enough to support a person and also provide insulation from the heat—just a couple of inches of hard rock resting like pond ice upon the molten fathoms. As the crews hauled and heaved at hoses, nozzle tripods, and sections of pipe, they learned that it was best not to stand still. Often, they marched in place. Even so, their boots sometimes burst into flame.

It was soon apparent that bulldozers were required on the lava—to flatten the apalhraun (the jagged surface glass, known elsewhere in the world by the Hawaiian word "aa"), to make roads for the pumping crews, to move some very heavy pipe. With the eruption going at full volume, bulldozers crawled up onto the flow. About a foot and a half of crust was enough to support them—to keep them from plunging through. The bulldozers worked in dense warm fog—the remains of the seawater pumped on the lava. The fog was so thick that a bulldozer operator could not see his own blade. Sigurdur Jonsson, who had lived all his life on Heimaey and at the time of the eruption had been working as a clerk in a hardware store, served from the outset with the pumping crews, and at times he was assigned to walk beside bulldozers and help guide them. Five people worked each dozer, he told me—the operator up in his cab, a person at either end of the blade, and the two others at the sides. The steel tracks of the big machines became so hot that they turned dark blue.

"One time, a bulldozer caught fire. Thirty metres away was a little pool where the water line had broken. He went into the pool. He came out and went to work again."

Sigurdur wore oversize boots with two or three pairs of wool socks.

"You couldn't stand for thirty seconds. In some areas, the lava was glowing. You would see a glow here, a glow there."

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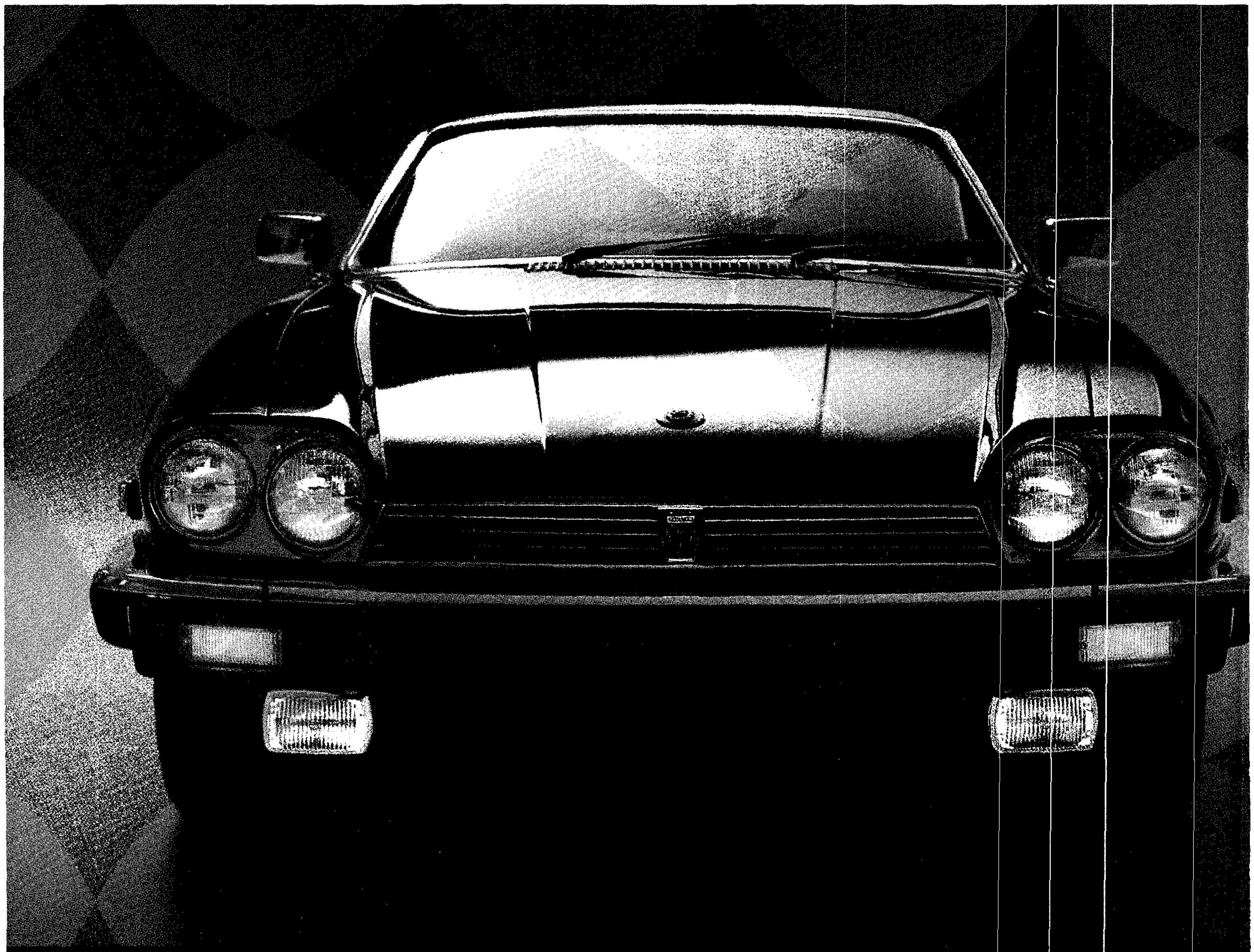

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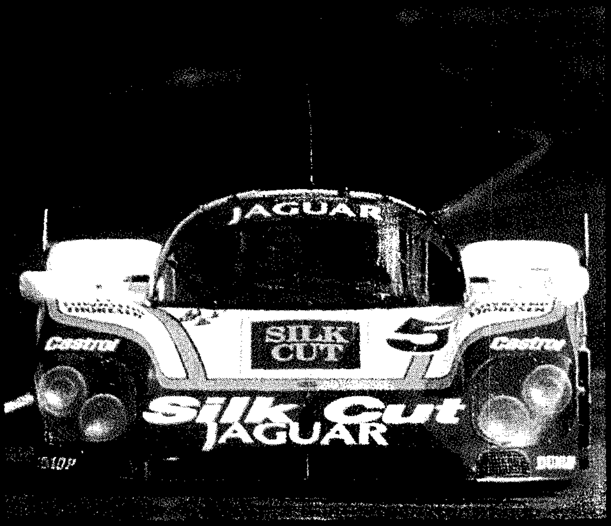

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grees, lava stops glowing. Even if you can see it, you may not sense how hot it is.

“Leather boots shrank under the heat—Icelandic leather boots with lambskin, made for extreme cold. People carried water bottles to pour water into their shoes. We wore ski goggles, plastic goggles. Often, we could not see. You could not see an arm length. You found your way by the noise of the volcano, by the shape of the lava, by the pipelines. The pipelines guided us backward and forward. You used the pipeline all the way, working on the lava. Sometimes you saw the light of the sun through the fog. As the cooled area was getting bigger, visibility improved.”

When the fog temporarily cleared, it was a straight shot of twenty miles across open water and up coastal slopes to the white walls of Eyjafjallajokull—at five thousand feet, a frozen cloud. A tenth of Iceland is capped with ice.

When Sigurdur worked at the harborside, spraying the advancing front, winter winds were fiercely cold.

“You were in the sea spray. You got ice on your shoulders and chest. You went up on the lava and the ice would melt.”

One day, seaweed plugged an intake for the pumps. He dived into the water and cleared away the seaweed.

The pumping platoon, at maximum, numbered seventy-five people, in a corps of five hundred who were engaged in the battle at any given time. Many came from Iceland (as the mainland is known on the island) to serve forty-eight hours at a stretch, and then go home. Sigurdur never left the island. He was, among other things, the head of the local chapter of Hjalparsveit skata—one of a number of first-aid-and-rescue groups, which are the closest thing to a militia known in Iceland—but he was not a leader in the fight against the lava. He was a foot soldier, and looked upon his role as such. Like the others, he viewed the struggle through the metaphor of war. “When the steam stops coming, and you see water running down the lava, you move the hose two or three metres. The lava front is black. Suddenly you get the red through the black. It could take hours—even days—to make it black. Sometimes it didn’t work. You had to withdraw. You retreated, retreated until you were too close to the supply line; then you moved the supply line. In the battle, if you did not have to withdraw hoses and pipelines that was a victory for the day.”

People behaved as if they were in combat, and on the streets of Reykjavik and other Icelandic towns veterans encountering one another will still talk about their service in Vestmannaeyjar.

The vapors of the eruption affected people’s throats. Mouths were covered with cloth. “What the steam did to your throat—it made everybody hoarse,” Sigurdur told me. “In the early days of the volcano, we were more hoarse. The doctors gave us medicine for it, which included Norwegian chest drops. You know what I mean by Norwegian chest drops.”

“Ninety proof.”

These recollections took place one summer evening in Sigurdur’s house, Hasteinsvegi 47, in a close-set row on a tranquil street. Gentle and quiet in manner, a somewhat heavy man, partly bald now, with a mustache and gold-rimmed glasses, Sigurdur apologized frequently for his English, which he spoke at about the level of the average American professor. He had offered me a Heineken—a particularly generous gesture, but not so much of one that it would cause me to refuse. In Iceland, Norwegian chest drops—all the high hard ones from Jonny Walkersson to Jack Danielsson to Lambeater gin—are legal, and are sold over the counter at government stores. Beer, however, is prohibited, in the interest of the national health. The only legal beer brewed in Iceland is virtually nonalcoholic. In a somewhat paradoxical country, this is a savory paradox. Icelanders go to public bars that scrupulously obey the law. Not as a result of disrespect is theirs the oldest continuous democratic parliament in the world. Across the bar comes a bottle of prescription beer, accompanied routinely by a throat-burning shot of schnapps.

My Heineken in hand, I thanked Sigurdur warmly, and said, “It’s hard to come by in Iceland.”

He said, “It depends on what you do.”

Continuing his narrative, he remarked that the eruption—for all its great surprise and early spectacle—had grown slowly.

“We had time to get used to it. You tried to protect your feet. I lost boots—I don’t know how many. Only once I had to go to the doctor. Also your wrists. If you fell down, the wrist would open between gloves and coat. So we wrapped our wrists with bandages. Very soon we stopped using helmets. Steam got inside helmets and hot water dripped on your head. We got from people’s houses old gentlemen’s hats with brims. They protected our faces. We had American Army helmets. We could always reach for them.”

The helmets were for protection against falling ash and, in proximity to the crater, huge volcanic bombs. The ash was typically about as large as bits of pea gravel. They fell by the millions—hot enough and sharp enough to burn and cut skin. The bombs were ejections of molten lava that flew high into the air, became spherical, and, with contained gases, sometimes exploded like fireworks. In their interiors, bombs were generally molten. After they landed and broke, red-hot liquid poured out. Bombs that landed as much as two-thirds of a mile from the crater might weigh as much as sixty pounds. Bombs that carried half that distance could weigh a third of a ton. Sigurdur Jonsson and the others in the pumping crews usually worked outside the radius of the big bombs—except when they were on crater watch, in an ironclad hut quite close to the volcano, where forward observers could see into the churning lava, report its current style of eruption, and warn their colleagues in the fog about fresh eruptive flows.

I asked him, “What if a big fiery rock came down when you were working blind like that on the lava in the dense fog?”

He said, “It just didn’t.”

If a crewman was in clear air with bombs above, there were ways to avoid the bombs. Thorbjorn taught recruits his own technique. “When you come to a crater and it starts blasting, don’t run,” he advised them. “Look up in the air for a bomb. If you think one is coming down on you, wait until you are sure it will hit you, then step aside.” People walked in pairs—one leading the way with eyes on the ground, the other looking up.

Thorbjorn said “a crater” because he had been close to others, equally active—notably on Surtsey. During the long Surtsey eruption, he went there routinely to record temperatures and measure the magnetic field. This was not a typical destiny for someone schooled on fission tracks and par-

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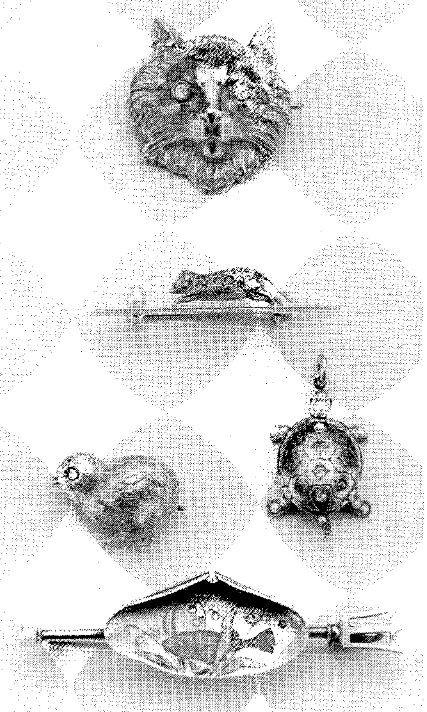

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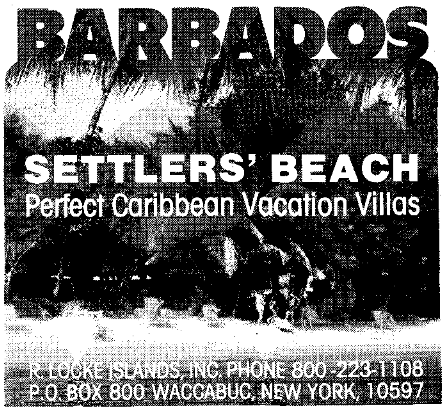
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ticle physics—for a scientist who had moved on from Copenhagen to Princeton, had done research on cosmic rays with John Archibald Wheeler, and had designed an experiment that measured the life of the shortest-lived particle then known. Thorbjorn, however, had returned to Iceland. In Iceland, as one of his colleagues has put it, "atomic energy is neither interesting nor important," and, *de rerum natura*, almost every scientist of any description sooner or later turns into a volcanologist. The colleague continued, "That is something that the environment does to Icelanders. Physicists, astronomers come home—they have no cyclotron, no observatory. The land just calls them, and they go into geophysics."

"You cannot avoid that when you live here," Thorbjorn said when I called on him in his office at the University of Iceland. He is slim in build, has a tall, thin face, a prominent nose. In his white turtleneck, he seemed to be a stretched George Washington. His hair, largely gray now, is closely trimmed at the sides, and sticks straight up in back in a manner that suggests astonishment. His smile is very large, and flashes often. He has been described as "a physicist of the screwdriver type, who can fashion his own instruments and make do with simple things." When he became interested in paleomagnetism, in the middle nineteen-fifties, he developed an airborne proton-precession magnetometer, learned to fly, and flew all over Iceland. On Surtsey in the sixties, he told me, a hut was threatened by flowing lava. Watching other lava approach the sea there, he had noticed that it flowed to the beach and then followed the coastline for a long distance. "The sea cooled it," he explained. "Then lava ran along that cooled wall. I wondered, could anything similar be done by man?"

To experiment, Thorbjorn obtained some fairly big pumps, which, in 1966, a ship carried to Vestmannaeyjar, where it waited in the harbor, in bad weather. In Vestmannaeyjar, as in much of Iceland, it is not easy to differentiate between bad weather and a natural disaster, because hundred-knot winds are common and waves will break over an islet two hundred feet high. In any case, the storm was in no hurry to abate, and the ship with the pumps went back to Iceland. Eventually, Thorbjorn tried some small pumps on Surtsey, but, he said, "it was not a real test."

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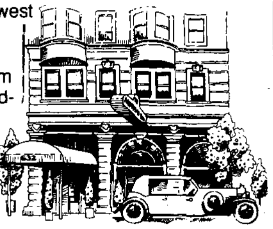

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I asked what had drawn him to Heimaey, where a helicopter set him down a few hours after the eruption began.

"Curiosity," he said.

But it was more than that. Icelandic scientists had conferred at once about who should do what. Thorbjorn was a former director of the National Research Council of Iceland—the provost of all Icelandic science. He went to Heimaey specifically to measure lava temperatures, but mainly to be on the scene. He saw the classic pattern the eruption was following. The lava curtain drew in from the two ends and began to concentrate in the place where the volcano would grow. Lava poured from this central vent and fanned eastward to the sea and north toward the harbor. Thorbjorn's living quarters were in the aquarium (he calls it "the natural museum"), close to the center of town. The Heimaey fire brigade was on the ground floor of the building. Thorbjorn looked over the fire engines, which were actually small vans equipped with pumps and hoses. They were kept busy fighting house fires ignited by falling bombs. But perhaps not too busy. Against the basso profundo of the volcano, the sporadic explosions, and the sound of raining ash, he had talked with the firemen and interested them in his idea. "I also wrote memoranda to the Civil Defense Council," he said, finishing the story. "There was no immediate response. The actual response was through the fire people."

About a fortnight after the eruption began, Thorbjorn and his aquarium-mates went out for the first time to water the lava. They chose a position on the shoreline roughly a thousand feet outside the mouth of the harbor. The harbor was a long wedgelike cove, open to the east, and its mouth was defined by a pair of offset breakwaters reaching in from the two sides. As it happened, there could not have been a more public place in which to conduct the lava-cooling experiment. Across the harbor, behind the firemen and their hoses, was Storaklif—a flat-topped sea stack about seven hundred feet high, rising sheer from the water. On its summit was the apparatus that normally received television signals from the mainland and bent them down to the island. Now a television camera on top of Storaklif was reversing the process. Unblinking, never panning, it stared at the new volcano and the intervening lava. The scene was broadcast by Iceland's lone tele-

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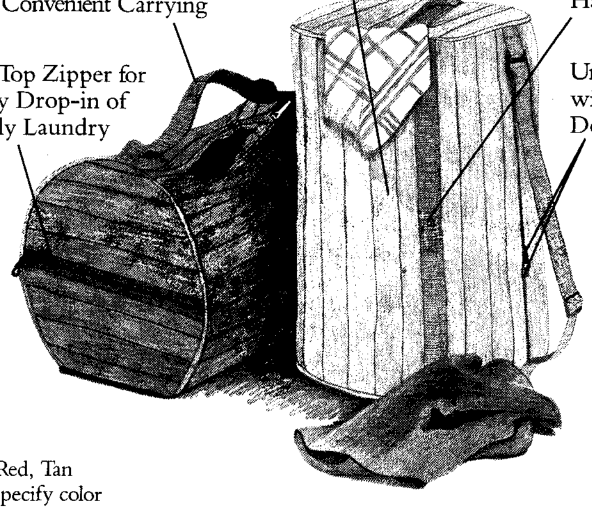
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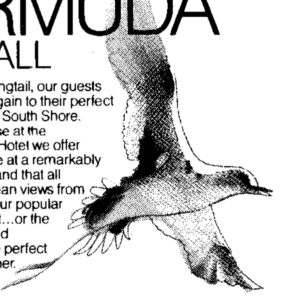

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As the hoses made their trajectories against the dark advancing mass and the water blew away as steam, Thorbjorn, of course, could not hear the laughter. Thorbjorn could not see his colleague Valdimar K. Jonsson, Professor of Thermal Fluids—a mechanical engineer who would play a large role in the coming operation—watching its beginnings with incredulity in his living room on the mainland. ("I laughed. I laughed because I did not believe that we could stop Mother Nature. The television showed a small fire truck putting water up against the lava front. I laughed. I asked myself, 'What are they really trying to do?' ")

The volcano was shooting ash straight up five miles. Where lava was entering the sea, bright white steam went five miles upward, too, joining en route the darker volcanic cloud. Who could not agree that the odds seemed to favor nature? Thorbjorn was impressed by the early results of his experiment. Where the hoses had played on the lava, its movement was arrested, while the unwatered flow on either side moved on, forming lobes—somewhat like breasts, somewhat like eyeglasses. After all the intervening years, Thorbjorn, recalling this, still seemed pleasantly surprised. "We were having some effect," he said. "It solidified. It stood still."

As the spreading lava advanced in the direction of the town, pumps obtained on the mainland drew water directly from the sea in an effort to save houses. Thorbjorn said of this second stage, "The edge of the lava became very steep and very high. Lava jets came out of the base. The idea was to be quick to cool them. The edge was never stationary. We could not cool it completely. It was very difficult to get hoses up on top. Some of the water was simply running down. Only a rather thin layer was being cooled. We needed to have water up on top."

Thorbjorn was later able to calculate that one cubic metre of water would change seven-tenths of a cubic metre of lava from incandescent flow to hard rock; and what began as the effluent of a few fire hoses would eventually amount to six million tons of water pumped on the lava—the equivalent of turning Niagara Falls onto the island for half an hour. In the first few weeks of the eruption, however, when Thorbjorn's experiments were only indicative, no one could have

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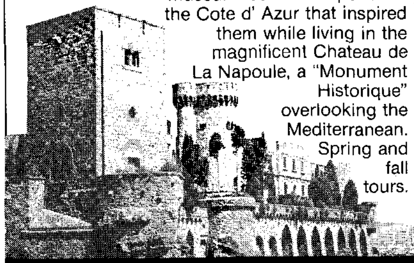

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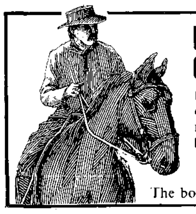

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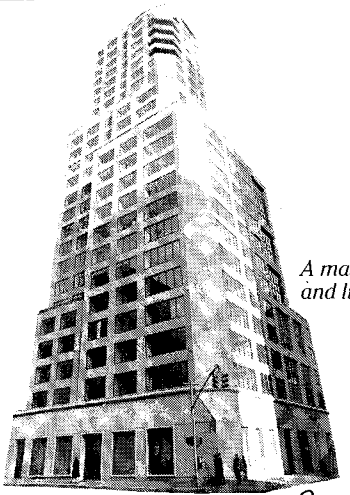
guessed the scale of the effort that was coming. Meanwhile, the height of the molten fountains reached seven hundred feet, and lightning flashed beside them. The sea boiled at the edge of the lava. When the crews went off exhausted after fourteen hours of work, they were at times unable to sleep, because, as Hawaiians would put it, they were "hearing Pele": buildings shook, windows rattled, and the inferno went on grumbling. For the most part, it was not explosive. Bjarni Sighvatsson, born on Heimaey and twenty-three at the time of the eruption, has told me, "It more felt than sounded. You felt it when you slept, not when you were working. The sound was like thunder, but distant thunder. The fire curtain also did not make much sound. It was like hearing, from a distance, waves hitting cliffs." When the eruption started, the wind had blown from the west for a time, pushing the fallout into the sea, but then the wind shifted and down upon the town came hundreds of tons of tephra—debris of all sizes from ash and gravel, through stones the size of apples, to bombs that broke windows and landed inside them. Houses burst into flame. Carpenters from the mainland, arriving by the platoon, began to cover windows with sheets of corrugated iron. In a week, they covered fourteen thousand windows. Volunteers from the mainland shovelled ash from rooftops. A small bulldozer was hoisted to the top of the hospital, where it pushed away tephra five feet deep.

A large part of these operations—including, eventually, the coördination of the pumping crews—was directed by the Icelandic fire chief of the American base at Keflavik, where fighter-interceptors are always warm. This was a slender man of deceptively mild aspect, vaguely professorial, appearing like a genie through his own pipe smoke. He sometimes wore a uniform, with stripes that suggested military rank, but he was an Icelander, not a soldier, and, in any case, no width or number of stripes could ever have conveyed the status he acquired on the island. Sent by the Civil Defense to help in the emergency, he quickly assumed command of one unit after another, until his de-facto rank had outflown eagles and was far into the stars. His name was Sveinn Eiriksson, but no one much used it. On Heimaey, in the battle, he was known universally as Patton.

"Thorbjorn came to stop the lava



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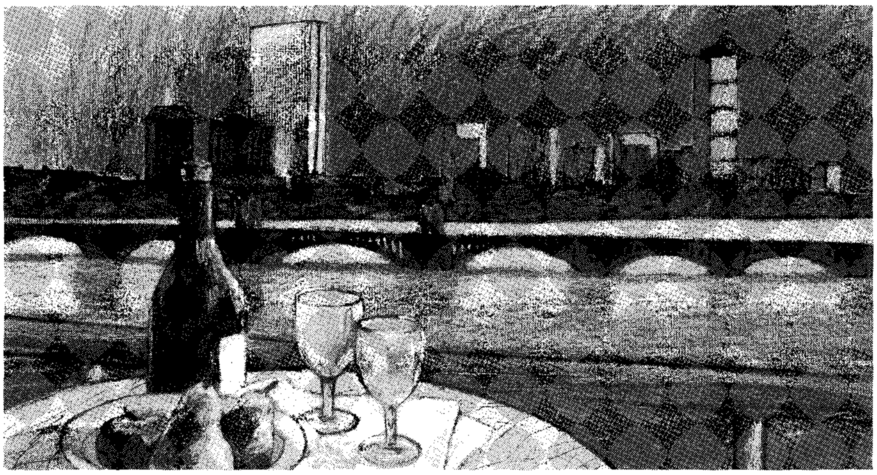

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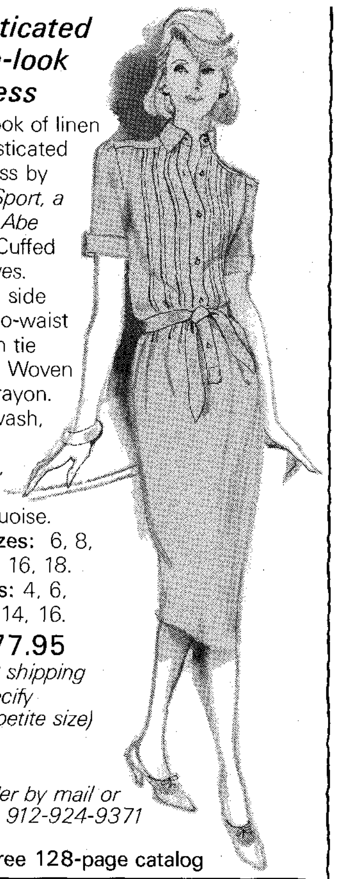

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flow. Patton tried to help Thorbjorn—to get his idea into practice. Patton made it work mechanically."

"He was the first one who really tried to fight back. Before he came, people were just saving furniture. He put iron in the windows. It was his idea. He was the first to start to do something. As the chaos got higher, his role was bigger. He was a great action man. He was in charge of the pumping."

"When the pumping began, I thought it was just crazy. I thought the same thing when he was nailing iron plates in front of windows. But he gave you orders. You kept your mouth shut and did what he told you. You did not so easily say no to him. He worked people out like I don't know what."

"He was used to being in command, and he could be very aggressive. He was disliked by many people. He was not a man to discuss things. He was a man to act."

"He ordered, on his own, the aluminum pipes from Keflavik. He always passed the system. You were supposed to go to the Civil Defense and they would call Reykjavik and a Minister would call Keflavik. He called a friend in Keflavik and the pipe was here in three hours. A hangar was under construction in Keflavik. He had the metal brought here for the windows. He never took no for an answer. If he thought he was doing the right thing, he did it. He took nothing from no one, and did what he thought was right. He was called Patton. He did not dislike it, I think. Not at all."

Thorbjorn, the archetypical scientist, was full of conceptual alternatives. Patton preferred ideas to report for duty one at a time. When Patton asked "Does it work?," Thorbjorn would say "It will do no harm."

These two met every day with, among others, Magnus Magnusson, the mayor of Vestmannaeyjar; Pall Zophoniasson, the town engineer; Thorleifur Einarsson, a geologist; and Gudmundur Karlsson, managing director of Fiskidjan, the island's largest fish factory. These "battle meetings," as they came to be called, were where strategies took form and decisions were made. More than once, they considered abandoning the island. After the wind shifted and the fire rain came, the command post made plans for a total evacuation, completing an exodus that had begun in the first hours of the eruption.

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Thorleifur called Reykjavik and spoke with meteorologists. The wind would change, he was told. If that happened, the ash would go back to sea. The group decided to stay. As if in response, the firestorm intensified. Haroun Tazieff arrived, a French volcanologist of world renown, and joined the bivouac in the aquarium. Three million cubic yards of tephra was already on the town, and the amount of extruded lava was fifteen times that. The height of the growing volcano was nearly four hundred feet. As the firestorm continued, a bomb weighing twenty-two thousand pounds landed sixteen hundred feet from the crater.

On the sixth day, the wind veered southwest, and the ashfall returned to the ocean. The town seemed covered by deep black snow. Many houses were discernible only as dunes in the tephra. If they burned, they left kettle-shaped pits. (Eventually, some of the ash-covered houses filled with steam and were cooked until their frames came loose like the bones of stewing chickens.) When real snow fell, it made a black-and-white, silvery, surrealist world.

Tazieff gave his opinion that there was no future for Heimaey. He said another eruption was coming. He was concerned about emissions of hydrogen, and he warned that the island might, in fact, explode. Tazieff was without peer in the coining of cheerless predictions. The volcanologist Sigurdur Thorarinsson awarded the community at least a fifty-fifty chance, but said that the eruption could last three years. Other scientists offered the calming view that this seemed to be a type of eruption not uncommon in Hawaii, wherein the pressure drops in a short time and the flow is over. At the University of Iceland, the petrologist Sigurdur Steinthorsson and others studied the chemistry of the lava, with the encouraging result that most of what they found was a form of basalt called hawaiite. Some of the Icelandic scientists noted that while a big ashfall had been thundering on the roof of the aquarium Tazieff had awakened to see a catfish swim up to the glass and open its mouth in "a silent scream of terror." A North Atlantic catfish is not an easygoing ameliorative Mississippi channel cat. It is a hideous gray calico, no less malevolent than the cat in your kitchen. According to the Icelandic scientists, Tazieff's nightmarish encounter with the catfish provided the data for his lamentable prediction. He

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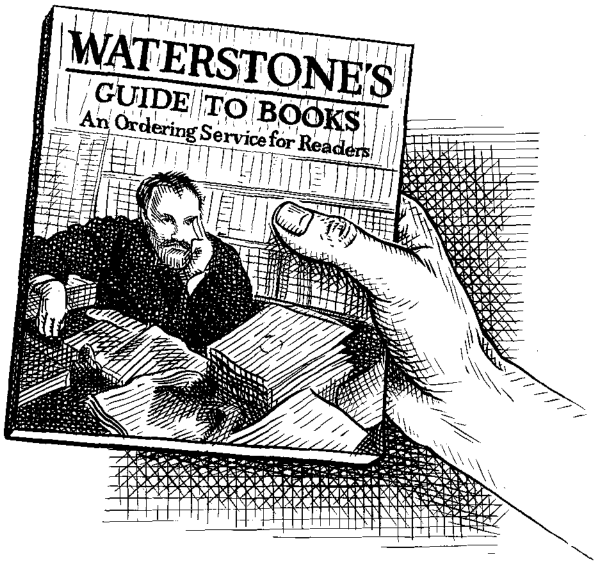
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read in the face of the catfish that all nature had been shaken to its foundations.

A high-fashion model landed on the island, was photographed on the black ash against the fires of the volcano, packed up, and flew away.

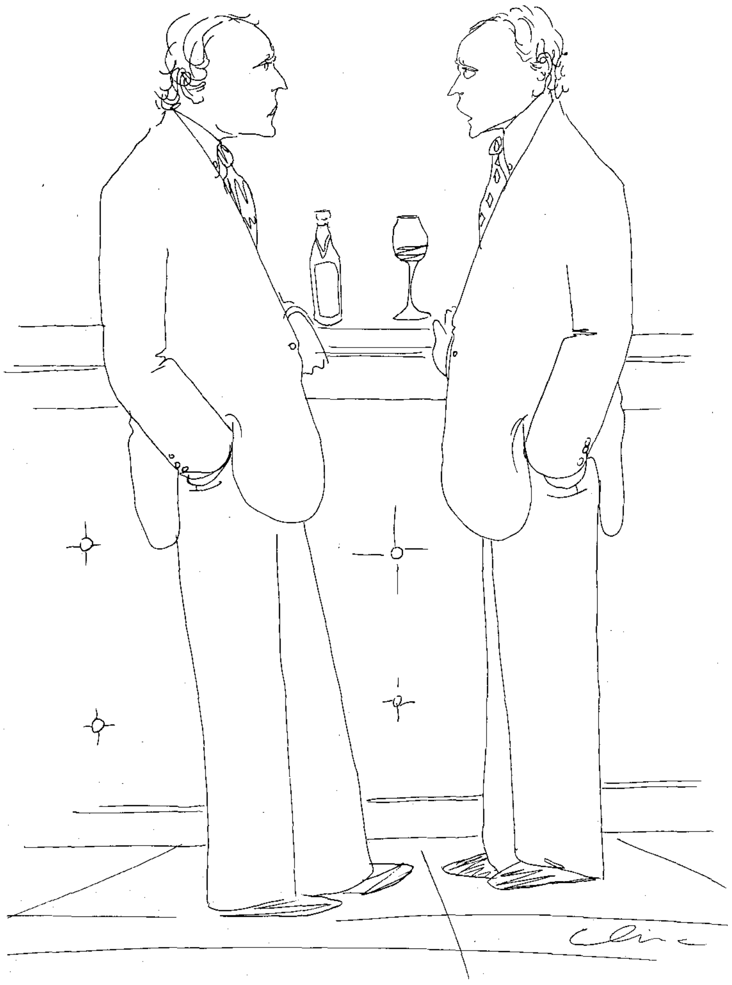
On the eleventh day of the eruption, ash came down with winter rain in a mixture so dense that a person on a sidewalk could not see across the street. Bombs were falling through the ash and rain. Flowing lava, moving north and east, had by now extended the island about two thousand feet—landfilling completely some twenty-five fathoms of sea. On the thirteenth day, a fresh flow moved on a vector toward the south harbor wall—the breakwater nearer the volcano. Lava crept along the shoreline, its progress written in clouds of steam accompanied by flashes of lightning. The volcano's murmurings became out-and-out explosions, so violent they shook the town. People watching the volcano could actually see shock waves rumpling its mushroom cloud. Seconds later, they would feel the explosion. On the fourteenth day, the force of the eruption increased. The liquid sprays of lava reached heights around a thousand feet. Complete pitch-blackness enveloped the town at noon. Five million tons of lava were now in motion, closing the distance to the harbor wall. All ships were ordered away. The harbor was forsaken. On this day, February 5th, known thereafter as Black Monday, virtually everyone on the island presumed that the battle was over—before it had really begun.

ALL over Heimaey are silhouettes of fishing boats on the sides of houses and commercial buildings. A large piece of outdoor sculpture suggests the unmerciful in the beneficent sea. Rock gardens have been made with volcanic bombs. Driftwood tree trunks—standing in the earth upside down, with their roots spreading out like branches above—are the nearest things in Vestmannaeyjar to native trees. With finely wrought signs, private homes are named and dated: Herdubreid 1925, Landakot 1916, Litlibaer 1904. Where an exterior wall lacks windows, odds are it has been used for a mural.

A mural on the upper half of a four-story guesthouse was painted in 1977 by twelve-year-old schoolchildren, whose tenure on the scaffold must have thrilled their parents. The mural depicts the predawn hours of January 23, 1973, when the artists were seven or eight and their lives were abruptly altered. Families with suitcases are running on a pier toward waiting boats. Many cars are on the pier. In the background is Helgafell the Holy Mountain, an ancient volcano standing silent while a wall of fire fills the night nearby.

The eruption came without warning—that is, without sufficient portent to yield an interpretation resulting in alarm. Gudmundur Karlsson, visiting friends the previous evening, thought he felt vibrations. He asked his friends if they were having problems with their central heating. They looked at him oddly and said they felt nothing. In the hour after midnight, Magnus Magnusson thought he counted fifteen earthquakes. They were like touches of pallesthesia, nothing more: little shivers in the bones. Magnus turned off his light and went to sleep. This was Iceland, after all, where the earth is full of adjustments, like a settling stomach.

Two seismometers picked up the tremors. Both were on the mainland and within sixty miles of Heimaey. One was under the charge of a schoolteacher at Laugarvatn, east of the capital. The other was on the farm of Einar Einarsson, in the Myrdalur, on the southern coast. Einar had the recorder in his living room, and it is still there. The seismometer is in bedrock a third of a mile away. When an animal walks around at night, Einar can tell from the machine if it is a sheep, a cow, a horse. He can differentiate the local milk truck from other vehicles. When the Concorde flies over, it signs the seismometer. The machine can discern the heights of waves. The university installed it on Einar's farm about a year before the Heimaey eruption, its primary purpose being to sense the threats of Katla, an unusually dangerous volcano only fifteen miles away. Hekla is in the area as well—the stratovolcano that appears in early literature as one of the two mouths of Hell. Groans from dead sinners have been heard in the crater. But Hekla is out in the open, observable under the sky. The baleful Katla is covered with ice. It lies under Myrdalsjokull—a glacier field of two hundred and seventy square miles. When Katla erupts, as it has about twice a century, it creates a vast chamber of water under the ice. When the water reaches a critical volume, it lifts the ice cap, and one or two cubic miles bursts out as a violent flood—a blurt of water twenty times the discharge of the Amazon River. The outwash plains these floods



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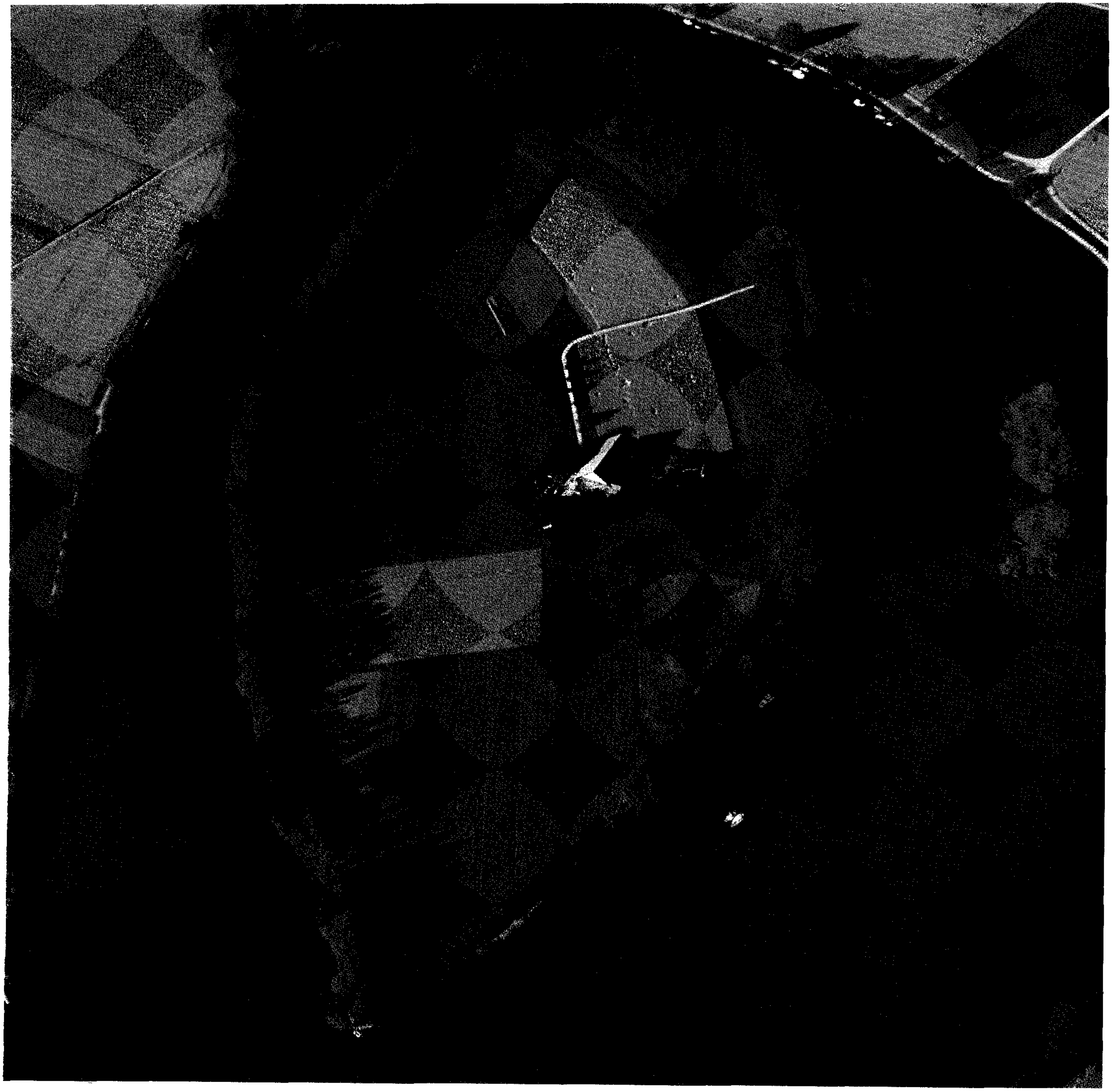

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have left behind are as desolate as the *maria* of the moon. A town, villages, and farms lie between Katla and the sea.

The day before the Heimaey eruption, Einar called Reykjavik and said he was seeing things he had not seen before. They were earthquake swarms and they continued for six hours. Reykjavik called Laugarvatn, and the schoolteacher said he saw them, too. The epicenters were about fifty-five miles from the schoolteacher, twenty-five miles from Einar. These two seismic stations were among the first of forty in a network planned to cover Iceland, and all are now in place. At that time, there were only the two functioning; and seismographs, for all their sensitivities, are not compasses. On a map in Reykjavik, the Civil Defense drew a circle around Laugarvatn with a radius of fifty-five miles and a circle around Einar's farm with a radius of twenty-five miles. The circles overlapped, and therefore intersected twice. One intersection was on the mainland, northeast of Katla and Hekla. The other was Heimaey.

Additional earthquakes came four hours before the eruption. It was later determined by analysis of seismograms that the magma had moved forty thousand feet upward in the earth in less than a day. Meanwhile, the circles intersected where they had before. If the third seismograph had been working, it would have completed the triangulation, locating the disturbance under Heimaey. Without it—and in the absence of complaints from anywhere—seismologists and the Civil Defense had been given a warning they could not understand. If the fissure had opened half a mile west of where it did, it would have split the town right up the middle and consumed it with lava.

Fifteen minutes before the eruption, the seismographs recorded the strongest jolt in the series thus far. It apparently marked the actual moment when the wedgelike force of the rising magma tore open the crustal surface, making the fissure, which—on and off the island—was more than two miles long. The woman whose central-heating system had been called into question happened to be looking out a window and saw the fissure open. Her home was that nearby. She and her sons got away, and have never returned to the island.

Pall Zophoniasson, in bed and half asleep, also felt that last precursive shiver. His wife, Asa Hermannsdottir, had told him somewhat earlier that she had felt a mild quake, and now this new and stronger one caused him to get up and put film in his camera. He remarked to Asa that perhaps there was a new Surtsey rising in the ocean somewhere near Heimaey. If so, he would photograph it from a plane. Then he looked east through a window and saw what he took to be a house burning—a red glow, a domestic accident. He called Magnus Magnusson, who lived on that side of town. Magnus said he believed there was an eruption somewhere east of Heimaey. The two got together and went to have a look. They saw the lava curtain rising, its fountains extending to the north and the south. Magnus took pictures. Pall took pictures. "We were like tourists," Pall remarked as he was telling me the story. They stayed half an hour.

The people generally did not panic. While aircraft were converging on Heimaey, and the National Emergency Operation Center was alerting ships at sea, the islanders' self-control seemed to grow in proportion to the menace of the spectacle before them. Quietly, they fled. Patients in the hospital and residents of the retirement home were flown to the mainland. Most people packed suitcases and walked or drove to the harbor. It was full of boats, thanks to the wild weather of the preceding day. Some people expected to be gone no more than a night. Others wondered if the island would explode, if a tsunami was about to wash over it, if ever they would see it again. In three hours, four thousand people left the island.

Dora Gudlaugsdottir, thirty-nine years old, got onto a net fisher called Home of the Gods. Roughly two hundred people were aboard; normally, the boat sailed with five. Her husband, who ran a small fish factory, was with her, as were their three younger children, including a four-month-old baby. The family had been asleep when the eruption started. For an hour and a half, they slept on. After 3 A.M., one of Dora's friends called. Dora told her friend to go back to sleep. She turned on a radio, however, and she and her husband soon realized the dimensions of the event. She made coffee.

"We didn't wake the children. We

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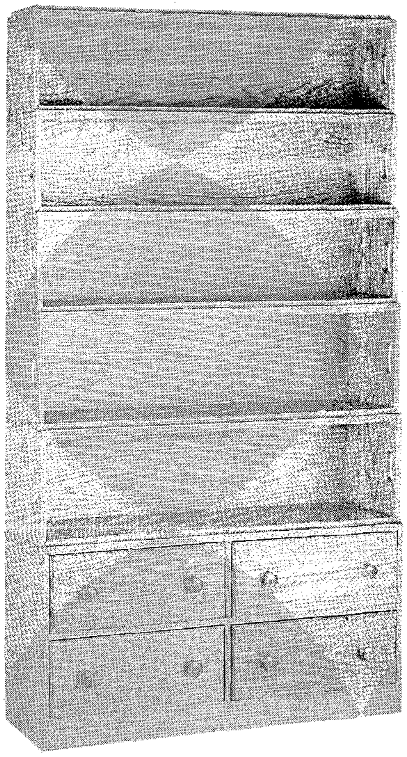

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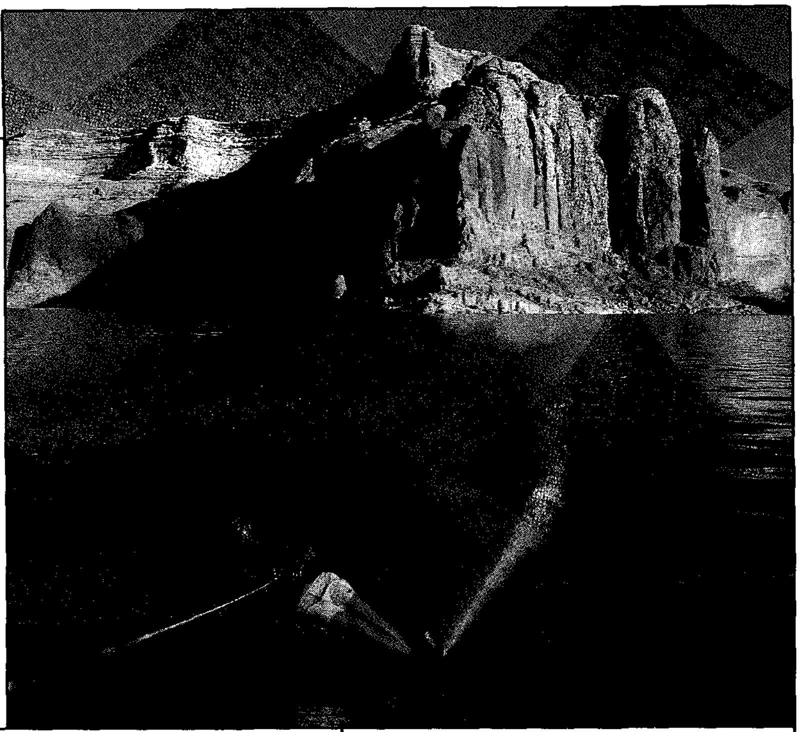

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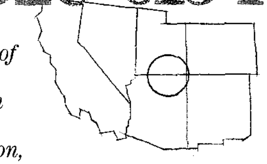

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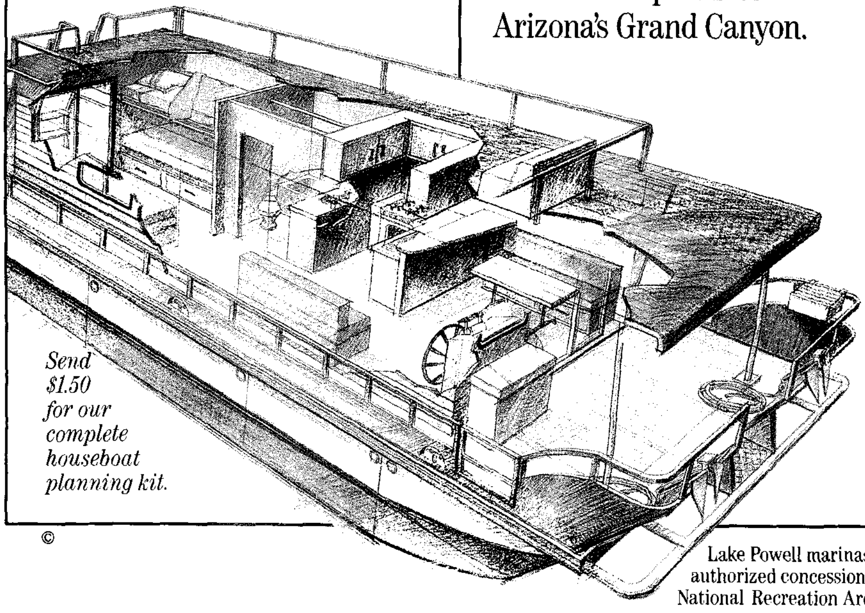

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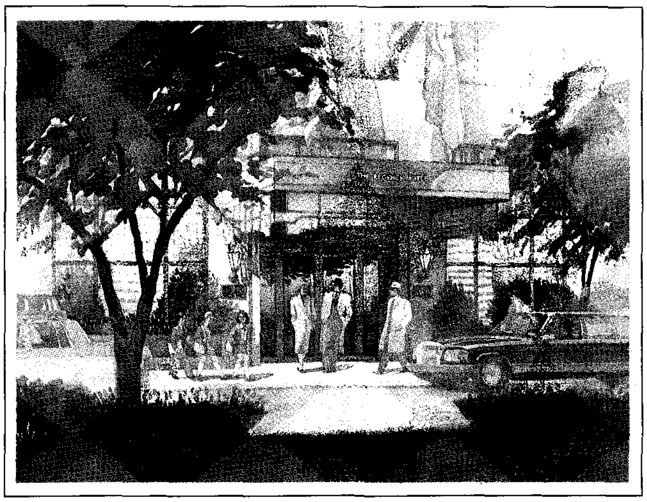

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didn't want them to be afraid. Then we heard on the radio that we had to leave. We could see the curtain of fire. We saw it move to the north, toward the harbor. And we knew we had to go out of the harbor."

They packed one suitcase for the five of them (two other children were in Reykjavik, in school), and departed for the quay.

"I saw no one crying. Everyone was still and calm. I think the Surtsey eruption prepared us for the next one. We knew it could happen. You began thinking, What if it happens here? The people were calm probably because they had thought about it and they knew what they had to do. Me? I was angry. I didn't want to go."

Dora now has a bookstore on Heimaey—actually, *the* bookstore on Heimaey—and is attractively bookish herself: a tall, slender woman, given to denim slacks and white pullovers, who wears reading glasses, has short tousled hair, and seems as generous as she is reflective. She told me that when she left her home she was mindful of Herculaneum and Pompeii.

"I had read about Pompeii, and I knew we had to leave. I knew there could be poisonous steam, as in Pompeii. Still, I was angry. Maybe I thought, I will never see this island again. I don't know. All the people had the same experience I did."

"You were angry at the eruption?"

"Of course. I couldn't be angry at anyone else, could I?"

When the boat cast off, she had gone below. Curiosity drew her up on deck. She took her daughter Ingibjorg, two years old, and held her hand as Home of the Gods, in a ruddy glare, passed between the tips of the breakwaters and under the sheer cliffs of the north side of the harbor. To reach the open ocean, the boat had to cross the fissure, and it did so in a chaos of sound and steam. Dora looked down into the water. She saw red lava there. In her words: "I'll never see that again, I hope. At first, I thought it *was the glow from the eruption* reflected on the water. I don't know if I saw it move. I must have been terrified. There came an explosion in the sea, and the boat shook very much." Salt water fell on their heads, and fine fragments of dark-brown glass. Ingibjorg was wearing a hat. Some glass stuck to the hat, and, in months that followed, no amount of scrubbing would take it away. Dora was bare-headed, and the glass went into her hair. "It didn't burn me. But when I came to Reykjavik I had to cut my hair. I couldn't comb it out."

Aircraft flying through the night toward the island saw something like a hundred boats, their lights brightly strung in a northwesterly line, heading toward the Iceland coast. On August 24, 79, Fleet Admiral Gaius Plinius Secundus, to be distinguished in history as Pliny the Elder, set about saving lives with quadriremes. Of course, there are differences between Vesuvius in 79 and Vestmannaeyjar in '73. There are similarities as well, however, which haunt the echoes of Dora's thoughts. Pompeii was buried under fifteen to twenty-five feet of tephra—roughly half a million cubic yards. In the course of the eruption in Vestmannaeyjar, three million cubic yards of tephra fell on the town, deep on the eastern side and thinning to the west. In Pompeii, as on Heimaey, many roofs fell in from the weight of the ash. Survivors of Pompeii soon returned, hunted for their houses, whose roofs were barely sticking out, and dug down to the doorways, so they could remove furniture. People of Heimaey did the same. Among those who stayed on the island to fight fires or pump water on the lava, some routinely shovelled pits in the tephra to get to the doorways of the houses where they slept. Pompeii, with four times as many inhabitants, was in area about half as large. Pompeii was a hundred and eighty-three acres. Pompeians were packed inside defensive walls, and they came and went through gates—the Herculaneum Gate, the Vesuvius Gate, the Water Gate. Vestmann islanders, while clustered, were immured by nothing but the sea, and they came and went through their famous harbor. As Vesuvius erupted, a wind was blowing across the mountain in the direction of Pompeii. That brought tephra down upon the city, first in very hot pieces the size of peas, grapes, and walnuts, and then in finer ash—but slowly enough to allow at least eighty per cent of the people to get away. If the wind had not blown from the west over Heimaey, carrying the initial tephra to sea—if the winter wind had, as usual, been moving in the opposite direction—people would have died, heaven knows what percentage of the population.

Pompeii was five miles from Vesuvius. The center of town on Heimaey was less than a mile from the crater of

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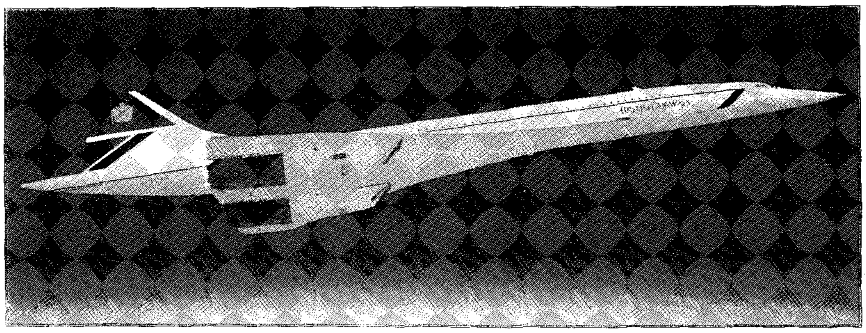

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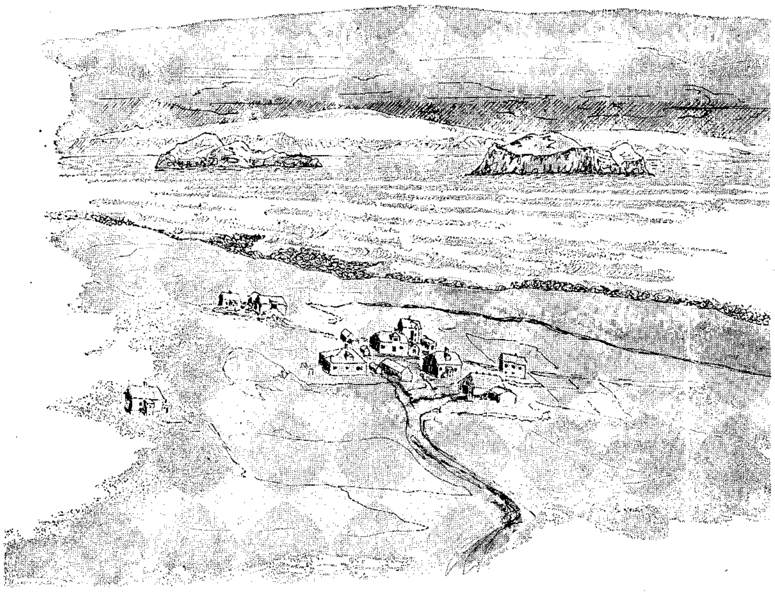
the nascent volcano. Vesuvius, beside the sea, is estimated to have been four thousand feet high before it blew off its summit. Eldfell—as the new, seven-hundred-foot volcano on Heimaey is now called—did not exist before the eruption. Like the people of Heimaey, the people of Pompeii felt some mild tremors beforehand but did not become alarmed. Soon after the Vesuvian eruption started, a large part of the periphery of the Bay of Naples was filled with panic-stricken crowds.

"There were those who, in their very fear of death, invoked it. Many lifted up their hands to the gods, but a great number believed there were no gods, and that this night was to be the world's last, eternal one."

Those sentences were written by Pliny the Younger, nephew of the admiral. To him the science of volcanology is indebted for its earliest preserved descriptions. As the huge column of erupting ash pooled against the stratosphere, it flattened out. Pliny wrote that it looked like a flat-topped umbrella pine. In the vocabulary of volcanology today, an explosively rising turbulent stream of magmatic fragments and magmatic gas is known as a Plinian eruption (Mt. St. Helens 1980, Heimaey 1973, Mayon 1968, Bezymianny 1955, Hibokhibok 1948, Krakatoa 1883). There is irony in the fact that the nephew has become in science the eponymous Pliny, for his uncle the admiral was only a reserve officer, as it were, and by calling was a naturalist. He can be likened vaguely to Rear Admiral Harry Hess, U.S.N.R., an earth scientist, whose "History of Ocean Basins" built the path to plate tectonics. Pliny the Elder, for his part, wrote the thirty-seven-book "Naturalis Historia." In 79, when he called for a vessel, he meant to head for the smoke and study the eruption. The idea of saving lives was an afterthought. Approaching Vesuvius over the water, he must have cut quite a figure, above the banks of sweeping oars. His nephew described him kindly as "somewhat corpulent." Today, he would be looked upon as somewhat sumo. The closer he got to shore, the more hot ash fell on him and his ships. When someone suggested that he turn back, he cried, "Fortune favors the brave!" The ships rowed on into the incandescent hail. Pliny remained—in his nephew's words—"so calm and cool that he noted all the changing shapes of the phenomenon and dictated his observations to his secretary." Harry Hess, skipper of an attack transport, dragged a Fathometer across the South Pacific and into the Battle of Lingayen Gulf, the invasion of Iwo Jima. Ashore, Pliny and his retinue went around with pillows on their heads, in much the way that people on Heimaey shielded themselves from tephra with pieces of corrugated iron. And suddenly he died. Pliny the admiral died, beside the bay, during the eruption. His nephew gave the cause as "some gross and noxious vapor"—gases of the sort that killed two thousand people in Pompeii. But no one perished with Pliny. His probable cause of death was myocardial excitement.



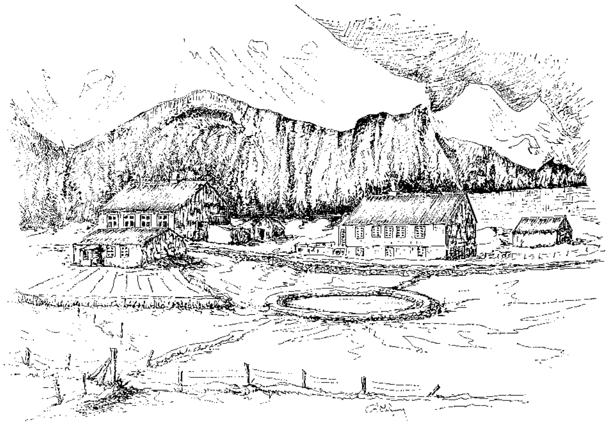
KIRKJUBAER

RAIN in the fine ash of Pompeii turned it into something like plaster, beautifully preserving the shapes of bodies. Herculaneum, ten miles away and on Vesuvius's windward flank, was buried not under tephra but under fourteen fathoms of nearly boiling mud, loosened from the mountain by steam that condensed as deluging rain. Notably absent was flowing lava. If there was any in the 79 eruption, it stopped high on the mountain. After seventeen or eighteen centuries, archeologists might arrive to scrape away indurated ash or mud, but digs do not happen in basalt. The eruption on Heimaey began in fields close to a farm called Kirkjubaer, in a setting so beautiful that to think of it is painful for people who returned to the island. The hay meadows and pastureland were a little more than a hundred feet above the sea, to which they sloped gently, everywhere presenting a view of nearby islands, of the reassuring mainland, and, on bright days, of the not so affirmative Hekla. The farmer of Kirkjubaer sold milk in town. On the night of the eruption, he shot his cows, left the farm, and went to the mainland. He never came back.

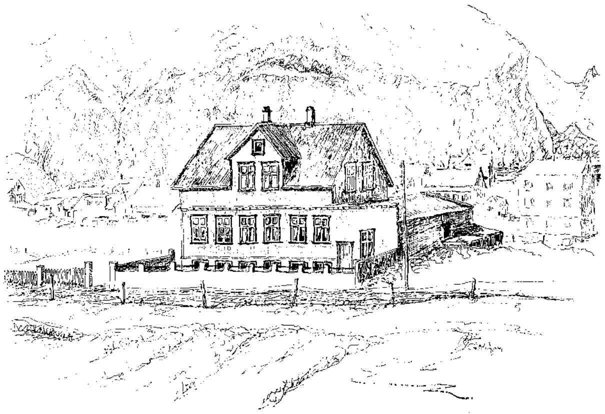
There was prosperity in Vestmannaeyjar. Its fishermen, who were using rowboats as late as 1905, had since grown rich. After the people were evacuated to Reykjavik and began to wait out the uncertainties of the eruption, it was said of them that not the least of their rigors was the adjustment they had to make to the lower standard of living in the capital city. In their separation, they were not being supported in the manner to which they were accustomed.

On the other hand, while people left the island in boats, sheep went by air. Poultry was removed, too, and Iceland led the world in evacuated chickens. A horse went insane. A few days after the eruption began, seven hundred and fifty automobiles were taken to the mainland in a ship called Hekla. The town was full of empty houses, some with lights in windows, some with front doors open. A number of islanders had left Heimaey that night for the first time ever.

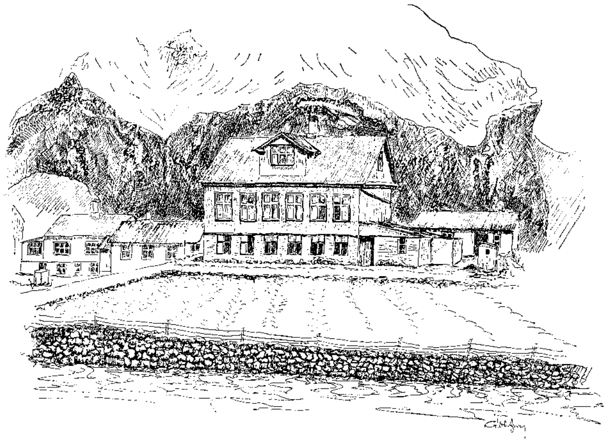
Just up the lane from Kirkjubaer, against the backdrop of the harbor cliffs, were Vilborgarstadir and the pond Vilpa, framed in transported stone. Vilborgarstadir was one of the first houses to be covered by the lava. Loftur Jonsson lived there, its last farmer. His wife, Agustina Thordardottir, was dead. He went to the mainland and never came back.



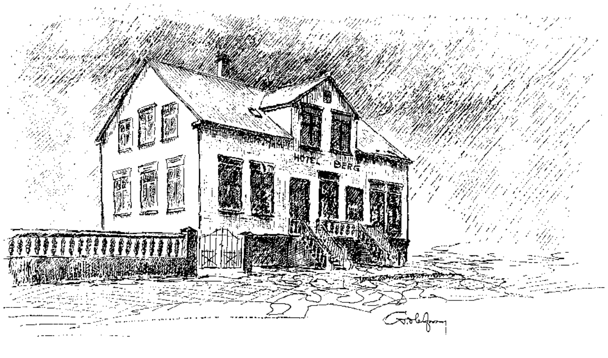
And not far away was Laufas, the home of the late sea captain Thorsteinn Jonsson, author of several books. His widow, Elinborg, was there when the eruption came, and his daughter Anna lived next door:



There were multifamily houses that resembled hotels:



And a small hotel was much like a single-family house:



These buildings and many others that are under the deep basalt were preserved by these sketches, made in 1973, for the most part from memory, by Gudjon Olafsson, an office manager in one of the fish factories.

In the early seventeenth century, a pastor named Jon Thorsteinsson lived for fifteen years at Kirkjubaer, and after he died a stone monument was erected there in his memory. He was killed by pirates from Morocco who terrorized the island in 1627 and have come down in local history as "the Turks." The monument—a pylon six feet high—survives. It was removed from Kirkjubaer at the beginning of the eruption. A year or two later, it was returned; that is to say, in terms of the coördinates of latitude and longitude the pylon now stands where it stood. People looking up from the streets of the town see its silhouette against the sky. It is three hundred feet above its original base. Kirkjubaer lies under three hundred feet of basalt.

I went up there many times when I was on the island—for the contemplation and the stunning views. On one occasion, Magnus Magnusson went with me. With his blue tie, blue shirt, and gray tweed jacket, Magnus had a stout and Scottish look that I found inspiring. He spoke like a Scot as well, having practiced his verbal skills as a young merchant sailor in wartime ports like Aberdeen. He had a round and amiable face, dark bushy eyebrows, dark-brown eyes, a leathery bald crown, and a fringe of fleecy white hair like the steam coming off the rim of the volcano. Through rectangular gold-rimmed reading lenses he peered at the monument.

HER ER KIRKJUBAER UM 100 METRA
UNDIR HRAUNI.

THAR SAT SIRA JON THORSTEINSSON
FRA 1612, LIFLATINN

I TYRKJARANI 17 JULI 1627.
ANDLATSLORD HANS VORU:

"HERRA JESU, MEDTAK THU
MINN ANDA."

Magnus Magnusson was born in Vestmannaeyjar two hundred and ninety-five years after the pirate raid. With his schoolmates, he grew up in an ambience of unabated apprehension —an enduring fear that Turks in some form would return. Looking up from the inscription on the monument, he said, "I remember always being afraid of the invasion of the Turks,

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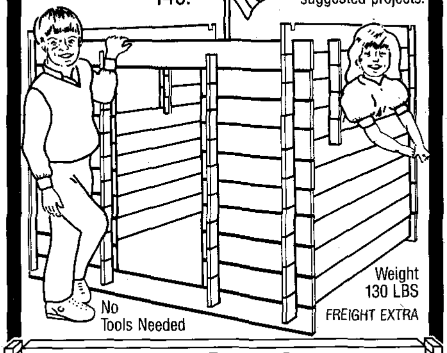

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who killed thirty-four men and women and took more than two hundred as slaves. People fled into niches in the cliffs. The Turks shot them down with guns. Also, as children, we expected volcanic activity from Helgafell. We dreamt of it in the night and were a little bit afraid. In our minds, those were the two most dangerous things—the Turks and the mountain. Children grew up with these facts."

They grew up with other facts as well, presenting risks that were less remote. "Twice, this island—when the population was under three hundred—lost more than fifty men in one day," Magnus said. "In a hundred years, the island has lost five hundred lives into the ocean." Pointing northwest, toward a cliff known as Hetta (Skullcap), he said an edible root grew there called hvonn, and it had once been a staple of the island. Over the years, thirty-three people fell to their deaths while collecting hvonn. Off in the ocean to the north-northeast, he picked out a skerry where, in 1950, a boat heading in to Heimaey had lost its power and crashed on the rocks. "The boat had been stood up by the waves until it was nearly vertical," he said. "At that angle, that particular sort of engine tended to come apart in some vital place, and that seems to have happened. The crewmen who did not drown came up on the skerry. From Heimaey, they were visible, moving around. Many boats went out there, but to no avail. The men survived on the skerry for three days, but the wind force was sixteen and no one could save them."

Herbes de Provence
heidi

In other words, the people of Vestmannaeyjar, who were emblematic of the people of Iceland, had lived since the year of settlement in the endless presence of disaster. They had obviously not been dissuaded by it, and had learned to subdue their residual fears. No matter how overwhelming a situation might seem to be, if there was any possibility of fighting back they had done so, and this seemed to have produced evolutionary effects, expressed in the battle against the lava, and much confirmed in the following story.

In the open ocean about three miles east of where we stood, Magnus said, a net fisher had gone down one night in March of 1984. It was a steel boat, seventy-five feet long, with powerful winches, a crew of five. The bathygraphy there was very rough lava. The net spreaders got caught in it, and the captain used his winches to attempt to yank them free. The spreaders didn't budge. Meanwhile, the cables attached to them were slowly wound by the winches, and the fishing boat pulled itself stern first under the sea. It rolled over. Three survivors climbed up on the hull. The time was about 10 P.M. The ship's emergency raft was trapped and unreleasable. The air temperature was below freezing, the water not much above. No means remained available to create a distress signal. Lights of Heimaey were visible to the west. The three men considered their predicament for half an hour. Then—in their jeans, their wool sweaters—they slipped off the hull and began to swim. One died almost immediately. The two others—Gudlaugur Fridthorsson and Hjortur Rosmann Jonsson, the captain—swam side by side and kept talking. Birds, screaming in the darkness, swarmed around them. After a time, when Gudlaugur put something in the form of a question there was no reply.

Thereafter, he talked to the birds. In daylight, sailors who have fallen overboard have been found by shipmates who steered toward hovering birds. There was no hope of that in the dark of this winter midnight, but Gudlaugur—twenty-three years old—consciously struggled to keep his wits through dialogue with shrieking birds. He knew that confusion was among the first symptoms of hypothermia and if he became confused he would die. Always, he saw light on the island. He swam by preference on his back, but he thought that heat would be lost most readily through the nape, so he swam for long periods on his stomach. He swam about six hours—at least five times as long as anyone ever has in water that cold.

When he reached Heimaey, he found himself in a hostile wave-battered niche in the new lava, up against a cliff. His purchase there being hopeless, he went back into the sea. He swam about half a mile south and, this time, climbed out on a broad flow of apalhraun, the sharpest and roughest texture of volcanic glass. Barefoot, he crossed it, and lost a good deal of blood. After he reached some grazing land, he saw a tub full of water for sheep, broke the ice with a fist, and drank. He came to a house about six in the morning, eight hours after his boat capsized. When doctors examined him, they could not find a pulse, and his temperature was too low to register on a medical thermometer. A year or so later, doctors at the London Hospital Medical College put him in a large tank—he is six feet four and weighs two hundred and seventy-five pounds—and hovered about with miscellaneous sensors while Gudlaugur reposed in water refrigerated to forty-one Fahrenheit degrees. After an hour, Gudlaugur was bored, and asked for television. The physiologists concluded that his subcutaneous fat closely resembled a seal's. In Iceland, where swimming is the national sport, Gudlaugur is not regarded as much of a swimmer. "He was fat," said Magnus Magnusson, as he finished the story. "He was no special swimmer."

Nor, by such standards, was Magnus a special diner when, in 1941, a bomb from a German airplane landed on a restaurant in Aberdeen. Magnus was at a table by an upstairs window. He could look down into the street. When the bomb hit the building, the front wall fell off. A waiter filled Magnus's water glass, and Magnus, who was hungry, did not lower his fork.

Magnus was nineteen. He sailed in North Atlantic convoys, and watched countless ships go down. He endured so many explosions that he lost a part of his hearing. This is not the Magnus Magnusson known as Mighty Magnus of the BBC, who has lived nearly all his life in Britain and translates Icelandic sagas. This is Magnus of Vestmannaeyjar, just one among the seventy-six Magnus Magnussons listed in Iceland's telephone directory. He has been described in Reykjavik as "a quiet man of solid accomplishments," and these include some years as a member of parliament from Southland, of which Vestmannaeyjar is a part. At various times, he was Iceland's Minister of Health and Social Security, its Minister of Communications. Democratically, he was retired from his duties as M.P. and mayor. Not every mayor, of course, would know what to do if his town split open and lava factioned the streets. Magnus Magnusson knew what to do. There came a moment in

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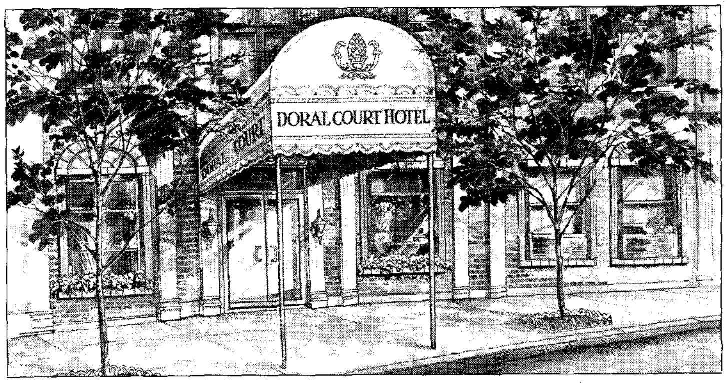

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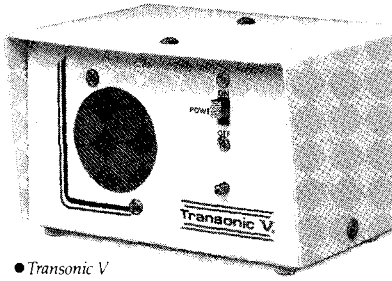

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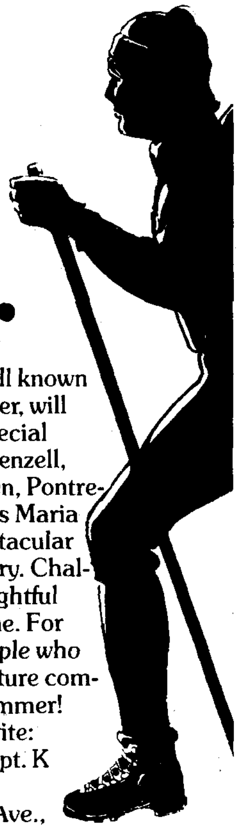

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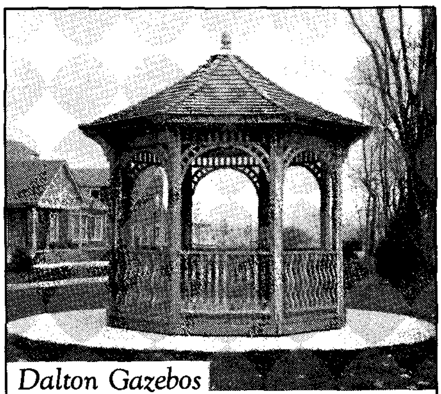

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1973 when Thorbjorn said to Magnus, "We cannot defend the town and the harbor at the same time."

Magnus said instantly, "We must defend the harbor. There is no use of any town if we don't have a harbor."

I reached into the ash at our feet, picked up a stone, and juggled it in my hands like a hot potato. Magnus said, "Dig two inches into the ash, you can bake hot-spring bread. Some housewives do it. It takes four hours."

During the eruption, Magnus was among those who dug down through tephra and in to his own front door. Although the house was buried to the eaves, he continued to live there, and shovelled his way in many times. (His wife and two children went to Reykjavik.) He has restored his house. It was not one of the three hundred and fifty that went below the lava. Looking down over Vestmannaeyjar with him from the pastor's monument on this day of white clouds and light wind, I found it difficult to imagine the rock beneath our feet at two thousand degrees. Now it was known as the nyjahraun, the new lava, and from its high advantage Magnus gestured into the topography of his home island and sketched it with its names, from Hundradsmannahellir, a cave where a hundred men hid from the Turks, to Blatindur the Blue Summit, to Lyngfellsdalur the Mountain Valley of the Lingonberries, to Horgseyri the Temple of the Old Gods. "Under the lava is the site of the first church in Iceland," Magnus said. "It was built before the acceptance of Christianity but in the same year." In Iceland, three dates that everybody knows are 874, when settlement first occurred, 930, when the parliament was founded, and 1000, when a great and prolonged debate resulted in the nation's accepting Christianity. During the deliberations, word reached the parliament that red-hot lava was advancing toward the farm of a prominent and influential Christian. To the heathens, this was a sign. One of them said, "The gods are angry."

The opposition replied, "Then what angered the gods when the lava we are standing on was flowing?"

Or so goes the story. Christian the country became, but in Iceland no amount of liturgy would ever clog the tube between religion and superstition. There was a long-standing omen in Vestmannaeyjar. One day, the son of a bishop would come to the island as a minister. Following his arrival, an eruption would take place. The Vestmann Islands parish had two clergymen. At the beginning of 1973, one of the posts was vacant. The church selected Karl Sigurbjornsson, and instructed him to report for duty on February 1. The eruption reported a week earlier. Karl Sigurbjornsson's father was Sigurbjorn Einarsson, Bishop of Iceland. The year 1973 would be a year of thirteen moons. This was not the sort of thing that generated faith —a year of thirteen moons. Also, there was an omen about the pond Vilpa, which was really a cistern—dry, ages empty, obsolete. The omen was that if Vilpa ever were to fill up, a disaster would soon follow. In the first days of January, 1973, the pond Vilpa filled up.

AS weeks passed, the foremost question in everyone's mind was, When will the eruption stop? The topic was most often raised with Thorbjorn, whose patient answer was profoundly scientific. Thorbjorn said, "With each day that passes, it will be shorter by one day."

In the middle of February, when the lava was within a few hundred feet of irreversibly closing the harbor, the nearshore water was as warm as blood, and vapors were heavy above it. More pumps came. At Thorbjorn's request, Valdimar Jonsson, Professor of Thermal Fluids, came to the island as well. He brought his skepticism with him. Instantly, it went up in steam. "The water had the effect of putting up a solid rock wall," he has said. "I saw a fixed point that had been cooled while the lava streamed around that point. After a couple of days, I was convinced that we could do something about the lava, but we would have to pump at least ten times as much water."

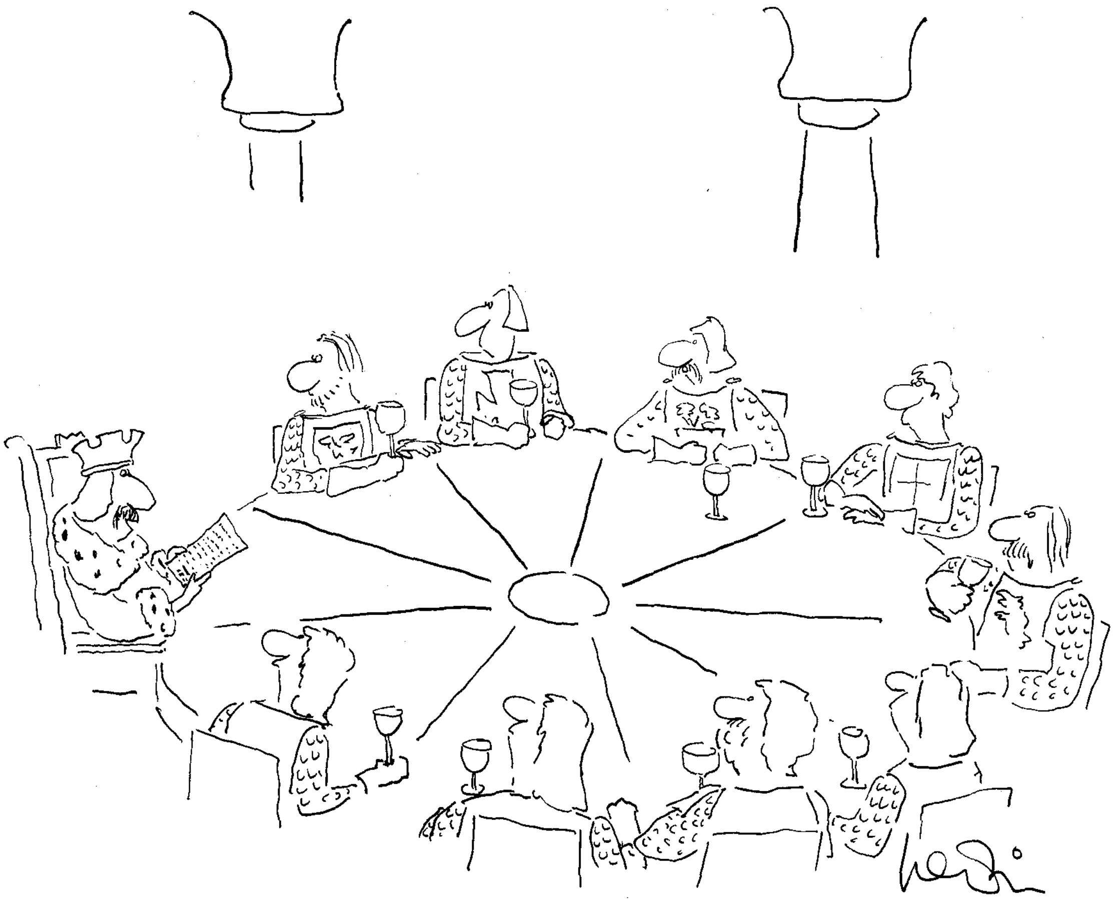
Even the tide was endorsing Thorbjorn. At low tide, the lava by the water's edge advanced into the harbor approaches. At high tide, it remained almost stationary. One did not have to be a theoretical physicist to evolve a theory out of that.

Nevertheless, from Reykjavik there was as yet little support for the pumping—such a costly thing to do against odds that seemed to oscillate between hopeless and overwhelming. Bulldozers had utilized the tephra fall to sculpt long barriers, shaped like earthfill dams and positioned to divert the lava from the center of the community. In the end, they would prove ineffective, with lava moving both under and over them, but meanwhile they served as platforms from which the pumping crews could improve their trajectories.

As the harbor approaches narrowed, the pumping was increased to thirteen hundred thousand gallons a day. Hoses set on tripods on the roofs of the cabs of bulldozers mimicked the appearance of flame-throwing tanks. The more steam, the more efficient the cooling. Hoses were moved when steam subsided. Thorbjorn came and went. The municipal airport in Reykjavik was only twenty-five minutes away. Patton was in for the duration, his face becoming bloodless on coffee, cigarettes, and condensed time. Patton was one of a number of people from the mainland who contracted what became known as the Vestmann Island disease. Valdimar Jonsson, who would have tested positive, described the symptoms: "If certain people stayed long enough, they found themselves unmissable. They could not leave the place. They felt somehow that nothing would run if they left." The syndrome pervaded the pumping crews, which, day after day, were made up of the same people. "They were just me and you and people on the street," Bjarni Sighvatsson remarked to me one day. "They were people from Iceland and people from Vestmannaeyjar. People left their families in Iceland and came here to work. A lot of people from Iceland came here to work."

The petrologist Sigurdur Steinthorsson was among those who monitored volcanic gas. He went around in an automobile, smoking fat cigars, while his wife, Helga Thorarinsdottir, was up on the roofs of houses shovelling tephra. "The roofs moved up and down," she has told me. "It was almost like standing on someone who was being sick. Heave. Rumble. And then the eruption would go off." The ash in the streets was dense enough to drive on, even where it was fifteen and twenty feet deep. There was method in the cigars: if they were snuffed out by a deadly emission of carbon dioxide, they would serve as monitors in themselves. The gas came over the lip of the crater, flowed downhill, and went through the town like a river. When humidity was high, the river was visible, with its eddies of blue haze. It suffocated cats. It stalled cars. People's heads were generally above it, but knees and elbows ached, breathing became labored, hearts pounded. In time, gas filled some buried houses and made them uninhabitable. Magnus Magnusson had to move. After the harbor reopened, a sailor who tried to loot a pharmacy—possibly hunting for drugs—died in a pool of carbon oxides.

Lynn Costello, aged twenty-two, arrived from the mainland on the first day of the eruption and remained for several weeks, working as a sound technician for the filmmaker Osvaldur Knudsen and his son Villi. Visiting the island was not a simple matter for someone with a camera. Journalists of all ilks were assembled in Reykjavik, flown to the island in an old Fokker, shown the fountains of lava, and flown back to the mainland. The Civil Defense intended that they *not* stay. So Lynn and Villi, who worked on the ground, had arranged their own transportation and secured from a friend a house in which to sleep and hide. They dug through tephra to the door. Osvaldur commuted from the mainland, shooting footage from the air. The work was inconvenienced by the time of year, there being only about three hours of natural light per day, but the pyroclastic spectacle made the darkness photogenic. Villi, who was twenty-eight then, has since become a sort of barrel-bodied St. Nick of a man with a russet beard that flows like lava. Osvaldur, who is no longer alive, made a full-time career of filming eruptions. Villi has continued in kind. It is possible in Iceland to have such a calling. With various chambered magmas Villi plays cat-and-mouse. He keeps in touch with pilots, and is ready at a moment's notice to be tightly circling an eruption cloud anywhere on a beat of three hundred miles. People arriving in Reykjavik can go to his "Volcano Show," in an impromptu theatre in his house, to see what is new in the national volcanology. There have been twelve outbreaks since Heimaey. Villi is kept so active by his ever eruptive homeland that his pro-



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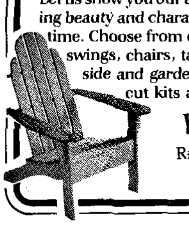

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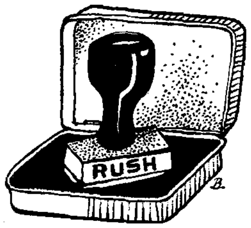
duction schedule lags behind the lava. He shows his audience rough cuts and narrates them in person, his voice somewhat viscous—magisterial and slow.

When I called on him in Reykjavik, he said of Heimaey, "It was like in a war. The sirens. The houses going up in flames. People from the U.N. giving statements. Fear of explosion from gas leaks. Bombs falling. It was a miracle that no one got hit."

"It sounded like Hell, with those huge lava bombs hitting the windows," said Lynn Costello, who is now Villi's wife. "It was terrifying to feel the force of those lava bombs coming down on the little town. You couldn't sleep. You were too scared to sleep. There was no place to take a bath. I didn't take a bath the whole time on the island." In the friend's house where they were hiding was a collection of films that could have turned Hugh Hefner into cryptocrystalline pumice. Lynn watched the collection bug-eyed, discovering wonders and anomalies of nature. Films like that were not just lying around in Phoenixville, Pennsylvania, where she grew up. They found an old storekeeper in the center of Heimaey who had spurned the evacuation. He supplied them with biscuits for a while and some odd bits of moldy bread until his supply was gone. Eventually, they became so hungry that they went to the mess hall where Patton's army ate, and they interviewed and filmed the cooks. Explaining themselves, they bandied the word "television." Finishing the story, Villi said, "After that, we could eat in Heimaey."



"First, it was a clean little town," Lynn said, referring to the early days when the fallout blew into the sea. "Then it got covered in black. Then it turned white in a calm, peaceful snowstorm. It was incredibly beautiful. When that lava wall was coming down the side of the island, they were out there with hoses—can you imagine? They actually stood there and hosed that lava wall."

"It looked a bit sort of far out, to say the least," said Villi. "The lava flow was so absolutely immense. But there was no alternative. They had to do something."

There were days of very cold weather. It was, after all, winter. "The heat made things more bearable," Lynn said. "When the wind was not blowing, it was nice to get near the volcano to get warm." One day, Villi went up toward the warm crater after positioning Lynn and her sound equipment in the cold near the base of the mountain. The air was biting. Lynn had not known Villi very long, and had serious doubts about staying in Iceland, as he wanted her to do. She had, in fact, pretty much decided to leave, and now, in the harrowing cold, she became certain that she wanted to go home. Plowing the snow with her feet to make large letters, she began to write I HATE YOU. She finished the "I" and was working on the "H" when she changed her mind. She felt ashamed. She knocked the arm and one leg off the "H" and made an "L." Her completed message said I LOVE YOU. The sentiment distracted Villi on the mountain. His vigilance relaxed, and a glowing bomb, much larger than he was, landed beside him with a reverberant thud.

At about that time, the growing volcano was seven hundred feet above sea level, its shape conical. Red molten fountains continued periodically to shoot high up from the crater, and lava spilled over the rim. On February 18th, however, a small molten spring ominously developed near the bottom of the north side, and lava ran down from it like a small molten brook. Patton sent some pumpers to put water on it, but they had scarce begun when they were forced to flee. The whole north side of the volcano came loose. Thirty houses were destroyed in an incandescent avalanche. The north wall partially collapsed, then moved away from the rest of the mountain, and, with its great compressive weight, both complicated and accelerated the motion of the over-all flow.

Here began a sequence of events—as I count them, four—which occurred across a period of two months and basically influenced the future configuration of the island. They resulted in deliverance and destruction, on a large scale. They all involved human intervention, with effects that affected other effects and were ultimately so imponderable that no one could assign to people or to nature an unchallengeable ratio of triumph to defeat. The first took place at the south harbor wall.

This was the breakwater nearer the volcano—extending like a finger halfway across the harbor mouth. Continually hammered by wind-driven waves, the harbor wall was in need of repair, and was about to get it.

As the weight of the dislodged mountainside squeezed forth fresh pulses of underlying lava, the threat to the harbor redoubled. The pumping-and-cooling operation, still not taken seriously by the majority of Icelanders watching it on television, became desperate. Lava moving alongshore at the rate of a hundred feet a day was obviously going to reach the breakwater and then, likely, cross it and fill the harbor. This seemed so probable that the Civil Defense Council once again ordered all boats away. Big nozzles on tripods were lined up on the breakwater like cannons on a deck. When the lava had covered the final distance and was looming very near, water trajectories could reach over the front and more effectively soak the top.

Lava tends to advance somewhat lurchingly as hardened material tumbles from above and fresh spills break out below. Sometimes a few tons—black-hot or red-hot—will roll down the front, swiftly killing anything in their path. According to Villi Knudsen, "the safest way to approach lava is to have another person with you and he goes first." While the pumpers continued to throw everything they had up on top of the flow, Thorbjorn, Thorleifur, Patton & Company called for the help of a commercial ship called Sandey. Ordinarily, it worked in shallow water around Reykjavik, using a powerful pumping system to suck up seashells for use as construction material. (There is no limestone in Iceland.) Sandey's equipment could spew out six thousand gallons a minute. When Sandey entered the harbor, at considerable risk to its owners and its crew, it joined forces with a local boat called Lodsinn, which was rigged up with pumps, and together they quintupled the quantity of water being thrown on the lava, raising it to more than eleven and a half million gallons a day. In the words of Agust Erlingsson, who was one of the pumpers, "a big steam came out of that." From a large nozzle on Sandey's bow, water arched across the harbor wall and splattered on the lava, where large chunks in the flow were so hot they seemed to be melting like ice cream. For four more days, the future of the harbor remained doubtful as the ships and the land-based pumps engaged in their push-of-war while behind the lava front the oncoming flow buckled as it tested the resistance of the cooled margin. Then, wondrously, a condition of equipoise was achieved—a standoff, during which the lobe spread to left and right and filled in the sea bottom on the outside of, but next to, the breakwater. The volume of lava grew, and the front became higher, but held. The lava stopped.

"It stopped one foot short of going over the harbor wall," Magnus Magnusson told me.

"Not one stone went over it," Agust Erlingsson said. "I saw one stone roll on top of it and stop."

Gudmundur Karlsson said, "I saw three or four stones fall into the harbor, nothing more."

The breakwater, which had seen its last wave, was no longer a breakwater. It was now the lining of the inner edge of a new high headland, occupying one side of the entrance to the harbor.

LIKE an iceberg that had calved off a glacier, the great bulk of the north side of the volcano remained afloat in a molten sea. It was a mountain in itself, and, moreover, it moved. It was landscape on the loose, an in-

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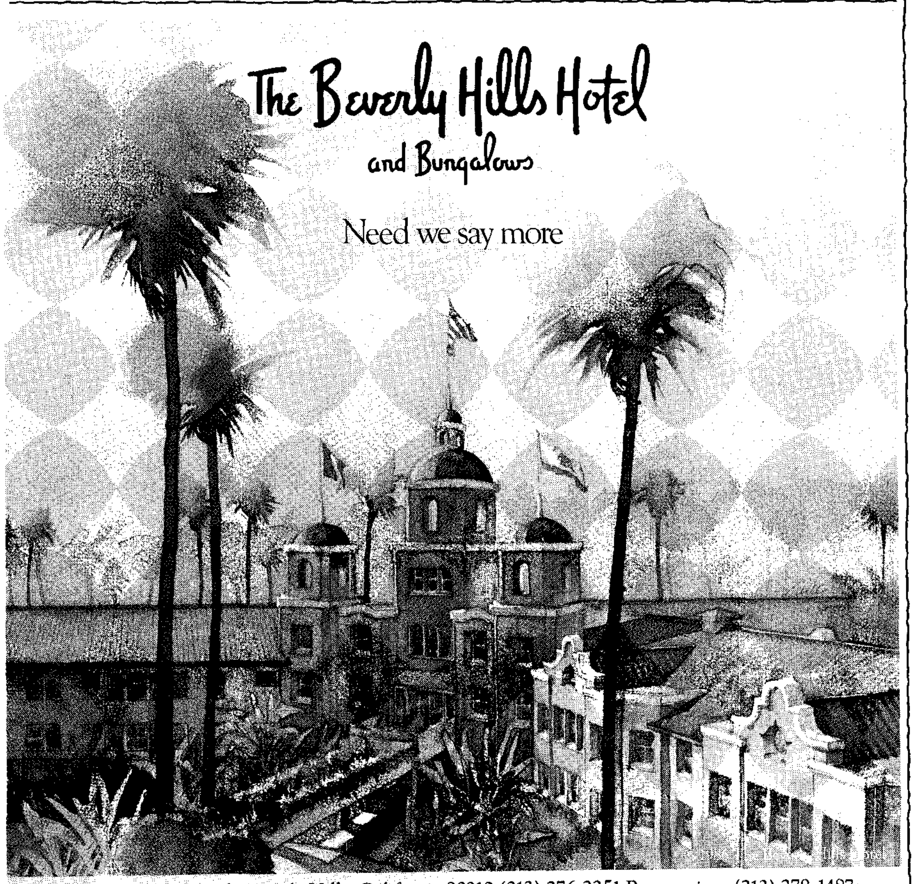

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congruous itinerant alp, its summit high above the lava plain, its heading north by northwest. The mobile mountain had a nine-acre base and a sharp peak. It weighed two million tons. People looking up from almost any street in town could see its silhouette filling the sky—today in one place, tomorrow in another. Someone named it Flakkarinn. And no one ever called it anything else. Flakkarinn the Wanderer.

The pressure wave that was created when Flakkarinn came off the volcano moved through the lava for a number of days and squeezed from the periphery new freshets of red rock. Some of this was in the lobe that stopped at the harbor wall. Flakkarinn, sliding downhill, also made bow waves in the molten lava through which it plowed. And as it went along it dug a kind of trough. Lava filled in behind it. Where Flakkarinn broke the crust of the earlier flow, fresh streams of molten material poured forth. People climbed up and rode on Flakkarinn. It shook as it travelled. In its first two weeks, it went half a mile.

If all of this had happened on a different vector, it might have been merely entertaining. But Flakkarinn was headed for the harbor. If one of its advance waves had nearly overtopped the harbor wall, what might be expected when Flakkarinn itself arrived at the same place? When the Wanderer reached the harbor, the harbor would become a hill.

A plan was developed to stop Flakkarinn. The dramatics at the harbor wall had amply demonstrated that pumped seawater could affect both the motion and the final position of the right kind of lava. As Thorbjorn explained, "all this was possible only because the lava was thick, viscous, and moving slowly." (In what is now the United States' Pacific Northwest, an eruption once buried in three or four days an area the size of Iceland. As they say in Olympia, try watering that.) To mount an attempt to obstruct Flakkarinn, all available pumps were requested from the Americans in Keflavik, from the Civil Defense in Reykjavik—and transports arrived full of pumps. The strategy was straightforward: Select an area of the lava lying in Flakkarinn's path, and pump enough water onto it to get below the surface rind and increase in size and number the columnar cracks that characterize basalt as it cools. Then more seawater, saturating the cracks, would reach all the way to the impermeable molten center of the flow, solidifying an over-all mass sufficient to block Flakkarinn.

When Thorbjorn was reviewing these events with me, he said, "This ship Sandey, it had some steel pipes over half a metre in diameter that were very heavy and difficult to handle. After we got the bulldozers up on the lava and put the pipes there, the lava moved, and the pipes, of course, broke. There were some very courageous men who managed to keep the pipes intact, more or less, most of the time."

"It was iron pipe put together with nuts and bolts," Sigurdur Jonsson recalled. "The lava would move it a good distance overnight. While you were repairing it, if there was a big explosion in the volcano the air pressure came like a wave and could shake you."

Everything was moving, up on the nyjahraun. Where the crust was thick enough, the bulldozers operated even on moving lava. Where they put too deep a scratch in the surface, the red fluid welled up like blood.

"Water was pouring straight out of pipes onto lava," Sigurdur continued. "It was just like a waterfall. Thorleifur and Thorbjorn had figured out where Flakkarinn was going, and that point is what we cooled. We used Sandey against Flakkarinn. We also used the Vestmann Islands pumping ship. Also a raft in the sea with pumps. Also fire engines. Also pumps on shore. Everything you could pump with. With no harbor, there is no town. It is just a summer holiday."

Something close to thirty million gallons of seawater was poured into that one chosen area to prepare it to repel Flakkarinn. As test drillings eventually substantiated, the volume of basalt that was solidified for this purpose was about the size of Yankee Stadium. Toward it, Flakkarinn kept coming—toward the chilled lava and, beyond it, the harbor. The crash was rock-buckling, full tilt, head on, tectonic. After spinning halfway around, Flakkarinn broke into pieces that no longer moved. —JOHN MCPHEE

(*This is the first part of a two-part article.*)

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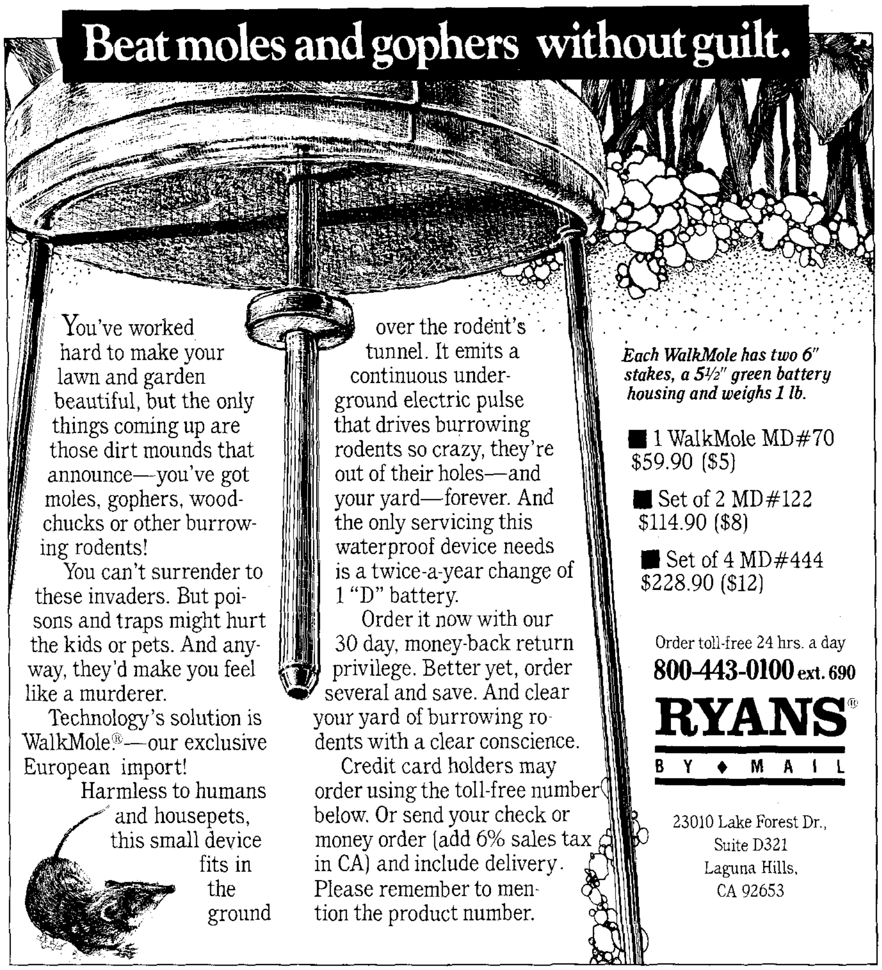
Like Charles Dickens said in his famous novel "A Tale of Two Cities": "It was the best of times. It was the worst of times. It was the winter of our discontent."—*Sara Summerhays in the Chagrin Valley (Ohio) Times.*

"Bah," like Shakespeare said. "Humbug."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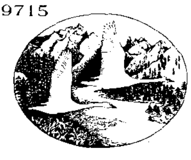


OUR LOCAL CORRESPONDENTS

SUBWAY STORY

NOT many people spend more time in the subway system than they need to. "Most people just go from Point A to Point B," Mr. Albert O'Leary says. Mr. O'Leary is head of the Transit Police Department press office. "The only people who do otherwise are cops and bad guys." Even assuming that the category "bad guys" includes many degrees and variations of bad and unfortunate men and women, there are *some* others who, for one reason or another, do more than travel from Point A to Point B (although they may sometimes do that, too)—persons who spend some part of their lives underground.

This is a story about people in the subway: transit police, and a person who hung around in the subway system and is presumed to be bad, and a token-booth clerk, and a man who runs a concession stand. The scene is a station on the IND.

At two minutes after ten o'clock in the morning on November 9th of last year, Frederick Nelson, a twenty-six-year-old black man, was standing one inch away from a young woman, also twenty-six years old, also black, on a platform of the IND station at 145th Street and St. Nicholas Avenue. In the next moments, the young woman—Michelle Hobbs, a subway token clerk, who was six months pregnant—went flying through the air, off the edge of the platform. Miss Hobbs says she was pushed; two witnesses affirm that Frederick Nelson pushed her. Mr. Nelson has said that Miss Hobbs looked like a woman who "needed help."

Mr. Nelson is a person who, like Miss Hobbs, has spent more time underground in the subway system than most people do. He is, it appears, a homeless man. (At least, the address he gave to the transit police at the time of his arrest—he was arrested, and later indicted, for attempting to commit second-degree murder in this case—is not a valid address.) He has spent a good deal of time during the last five or six years right where the incident with Miss Hobbs took place—at the 145th Street IND station.

This is a big station. Trains come in at two levels, and above them is a third level, which is a long concourse. There are token booths at either end of this concourse, and there are two focuses of human activity in it: one is a transit-police station; the other is a small hot-dog and news stand at the south end, near staircases that descend to the upper train level. Frederick Nelson came up these stairs sometime around three minutes past ten last November 9th, went to the hot-dog stand, and ordered a cup of coffee. He was arrested there at four minutes past ten by four of the dozens of transit policemen who work out of the station house a hundred yards away. So, as to the principal events we are discussing here, it was a matter of about two minutes. At about two minutes after ten Frederick Nelson was standing close to Michelle Hobbs on the uptown platform of the upper train level; two minutes later he was upstairs at the hot-dog stand in police custody, accused of pushing her onto the tracks.

Michelle Hobbs went flying. She says that when she was pushed off the platform she twisted in midair to try to get a look at the person who had pushed her. Frederick Nelson has said he had an impression of a woman flying away from him. Michelle Hobbs says she looked at the man who had pushed her and saw that he was a stranger but she cannot say that the man was Frederick Nelson.

She fell onto the tracks as a train was coming toward her. She considered trying to run to the wall opposite the platform, where she thought she might find room to stand out of the way of the train (she remembered seeing subway workmen stand against the wall when a train passed), but she didn't think she had time, so she went under the platform she had been standing on, where there was a little space. The first car was almost past her, and then the train halted, trapping her under the platform. At six minutes past ten, the power to the third rail was shut off and a rescue operation began.

As I worked on this story, I kept thinking about the moment when Michelle Hobbs turned in midair to get a look at Frederick Nelson, and I also thought about the time during which Mr. Nelson was standing, in police custody, just by the small concession stand on the concourse of the station (within sight of the transit-police station) while, one level below, Michelle Hobbs, a frightened pregnant woman, crouched under the platform from which she had been pushed.

It is time to announce a circumstance in this case about which there is a little of the miraculous: in the opinion of the officers I talked to, there is no other space in Transit Police District 3 (under a platform, that is) where Michelle Hobbs would have been as safe as she was in the spot where she took refuge; the wall under the platform is, just here, about five feet away from the track and about three feet away from the electrified metal shoes that project from the undercarriage of every passing train, and that would have electrocuted Miss Hobbs if she hadn't had this extra room to be in.

THE first transit-police officer to make contact with Michelle Hobbs was Officer Bill Paredes, who is twenty-five years old. He called out to her from the platform, and she responded. As he tells it: "I was in the mezzanine area and some unknown gentleman came up to me and said a lady was run over by the train, so at that time me and my partner responded downstairs to the northbound platform. At that time, I found out where the woman was in reference to the platform and the train, and how far the train had bypassed her." In fact, two-thirds of the first car of the train had passed the place where Miss Hobbs was crouching. "I just started calling. I was just trying to talk to Miss Hobbs. So I more or less found out where she was, and I just engaged in regular verbal contact with her. So she was just telling me her name, and that she was hurt badly—bruises—and I was asking what kind of a position she was sitting in. At this time, we were waiting for the power to be shut off. I was asking her was she missing anything. At six minutes after ten, the power was shut off. At that time, myself, Officer Ronald Bauman, and Officer Andrew Lampkins

Floyd Benton Wakes Up to Five Inches of Snow

• •

boarded the track area. I entered first."

"Did you have any idea how much space there was under the platform?" I asked Officer Paredes.

"No, I didn't. As a matter of fact, when I was speaking to her I assumed from the way she was talking, and the way everybody else was talking, that she was underneath the train. When I was talking to her, I was trying to visualize her underneath the train. When I asked her, 'What position are you in?' she goes, 'Kneeling down.' I thought, How can she be kneeling down? I figured I don't want to alarm her. Maybe she *thinks* she's kneeling down. Maybe she's lying down and doesn't even realize it."

"What's it like to go down under in that situation?" I asked Officer Paredes.

"You really don't realize how big the train is," he said. "Most people just see the train from the area where they enter. That's only half the train. The train is quite large—you're nothing to the train. On the track area, you're just a little nothing compared to the train."

"And then you looked for Miss Hobbs?"

"When I looked down—it was kind of dark—she was thirty or forty feet away, you really couldn't see, it was still dark, so we took out our lights and we shined them in. There she was—in between, in like a three-foot area."

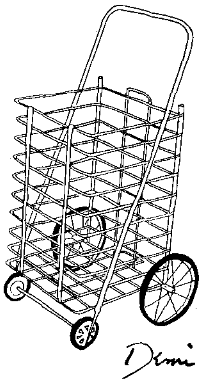
Officer Paredes went between the train and Miss Hobbs, and got behind her. "You see, I'm only five feet seven inches, so it wasn't that difficult," he told me. "I saw her on her knees, or maybe squatting—holding on to the wall of the platform with one hand, the other one on the ground. My first look, I could see a woman. She was a female, black, dressed in an overcoat, which she still had bundled up. She was kind of in a daze, squatting down. She's more or less facing the train. She looked young. I identified myself as the person who was speaking to her from above, so she felt a little bit at ease. I made sure there were no limbs lying around anywhere, because even though she said that she was all right, when you're in front of a train you don't expect to be all there, you know what I mean? So I passed between her and the train; I went behind her, and I took— I think she was carrying a pocketbook. I took her pocketbook and handed it to Ron"—Officer Bauman—"and Ron handed it out, and he had one of the supervisors hold on to the pocketbook, and we made sure she was all right, and we just, you know, step by step led her out. I was keeping her stable from the back so she wouldn't sway either way as we took her over the shoe." Each subway car has four shoes—two in front, two in back. One shoe on the front of the first car had passed Miss Hobbs before the train stopped, and the transit-police officers and Miss Hobbs had to step over it on their way out.

Officer Paredes comes from Suffolk County. He has been a transit-police officer for three years. Cases like Miss Hobbs', in which a person ends up on the subway tracks, are called Man Unders. Officer Paredes has had two Man Unders besides the Hobbs incident. "They weren't as positive as Miss Hobbs' experience," he told me. In one case, a man died. "He had a foot and a thigh missing," Officer Paredes said. In the other case, a man whom Officer Paredes described as "under the influence" threw two men onto the track at 110th Street and Lenox Avenue, but no train was coming.

I asked Officer Paredes if a Man Under was common—if it happened a lot.

"It's no matter. Every then and again, someone unfortunately slips, falls, gets pushed or thrown, or what have you. There's no pattern. It just happens," he said.

WHEN they saw Michelle Hobbs pushed onto the tracks, a number of her fellow-citizens went immediately to the transit-police station on the concourse. Officer Paredes and his partner, José Ramírez, and others went down one level, to the uptown-local platform, and at the same time the desk officer put in a call to Officers Ronald Bauman and Andrew Lampkins, who are R.M.P.—Radio Motor Patrol—operators: they drive a transit-police car that carries some emergency medical equipment, one of the Transit Police Department's few aboveground operations. Officer Bauman was driving the car at the time. He is a sturdy young policeman, thirty years old. "We were at a Hundred and Seventy-seventh and Fort Washington Avenue and we received a call on the radio,” he told me. “We got the call for someone under—Man Under, they call it—and we responded with lights, sirens; we got there in approximately three minutes. We’re talking thirty, thirty-five blocks south, and also we were all the way west.” During their three-minute trip from Fort Washington Avenue to the 145th Street station, Officers Bauman and Lampkins learned that they had a “confirmed,” or “official,” Man Under. They asked if the power on the third rail had been switched off. As they pulled up to the station, they were told over the radio that the power was off and that they should bring their spotlights. They pulled the lights out of the trunk of the car, went down into the station, came head on to the train, and saw that the train’s headlights were not on. That proved that the power was indeed off. They encountered a number of their fellow-officers, including Officer Paredes, who was talking to Miss Hobbs. This is how Officer Bauman tells the story:



“Officer Lampkins, who was riding with me, Officer Paredes, who was on the platform, and myself, we went onto the track, figuring that’s the only way we’re going to find her. And we went underneath, and when we got underneath I was amazed that there was such a crawl space under the platform, I’ve never seen it before. So once we got underneath, turned on the lights, we spotted her; she was in a kneeling position. But I was amazed at the size of the space. It was very unusual. When we got underneath, we crawled up to her. Not knowing what’s wrong with her yet, I asked her if she was hurt. She says, ‘Yeah.’ I says, ‘How bad? Can you move and stuff?’ She says, ‘Yes.’ ‘All right,’ I said, ‘take it nice and easy, relax, we’re here. Now, what I want you to do, I want you to roll over into a sitting position, so let me take a look, I don’t know how badly you’re hurt, I want to find out.’ We took the spotlight, looked over her legs. As it was, she had a couple of scrapes up on the legs, but nothing really serious. Once we figured that out—that she was all right as far as being able to get out—I asked her, ‘Would you be able to move?’ She says, ‘Yes.’ I said, ‘Could you crawl?’ She says, ‘Yes.’ I said, ‘All right, I’ll stay in front of you, we’ll keep the light on, we’ll have an officer behind you, you should take it nice and slow. Listen to what I say, come crawl out with us.’ ” I should record the fact that as he spoke this last sentence Officer Bauman lowered his voice until it was quite gentle.

“The total time she was under was about twenty minutes,” Officer Bauman continued. “We were with her fifteen minutes. We brought her nice and slow. We came by the shoe of the train. I shined the light on the shoe, and I told her, ‘See it? Don’t go near it.’ Just because the power is off doesn’t mean it’s not dangerous. We took her thirty, forty feet. We stayed down. We had other officers on the platform. She reached up her hands; we had an officer take each one; then we took her legs and lifted her up enough so she could turn and sit. She sat on the edge of the platform; then they kind of just slid her back. The Emergency Medical Service”—of New York City—“was there by then. They brought her to District”—the transit-police station on the concourse—“and they examined her. That was when they found out she was pregnant.

“The one thing I try to tell people is, like, they made it in the paper that she fell into this crawl space immaculately and was saved, but it doesn’t work all the time. This is one of the only stations I know it can work at, getting underneath the platform. Normally, you’ll clear the train, but the shoe that sticks out from under the train, *that* goes right to the wall, so that if someone was under there, the shoe would catch you. In this case, you have an additional three feet other than the shoe, and a space about three feet high.”

“Incredible,” I said.

“You’ve never seen it before,” Officer Bauman said. “If you’re on Broadway or Lenox Avenue, the shoe would have ate you alive. Because on those lines the shoe only runs maybe four or five inches off the wall.”

I asked Officer Bauman about himself.

“I’m married. I have one daughter and my wife. I live in Queens. I was in the Fire Department in the Air Force. I did a certain amount of drills, emergency situations, driving.”

I interviewed the officers connected with the Michelle Hobbs case in the Transit Police District 3 headquarters, at the 145th Street station. I used the office of Captain Rigoberto Lopez, the district commander. The third officer I interviewed was Officer Andrew Lampkins—Officer Bauman’s partner. Officers Bauman and Paredes are young officers. Andrew Lampkins, on the other hand, is a mature man, who has been on the transit-police force for fifteen years—eleven of these in District 3. On a lapel of his uniform jacket was row upon row of decorations. They were arranged on a kind of plastic decoration holder attached to the lapel; the lapel was top-heavy and threatened to fall over.

“Can you tell me something about your decorations?” I asked him.

He had real doubts about talking about them. “Well,” he said, “one is a booth robbery, one of them is on a stabbing. A *couple* of them is stabbing, fights, and a person getting pushed on a track. I’ve had that experience before, but there wasn’t a *train* involved. A person got pushed on a track in a fight—we had to go down and pick him up before the train came. And another case was my partner got shot over on Lenox Avenue—that was back in 1978—and there were a few other ones.”

I asked Officer Lampkins if his partner who got shot was all right, and he said yes, he was working in the radio room at that moment. Then Officer Lampkins told me about going down onto the tracks to rescue Michelle Hobbs, and I couldn’t help seeing that he was deeply affected by the event as it came back to him in the telling, and that he fought against this. For one thing, he described Miss Hobbs as being “totally destroyed, panicked,” while the other officers described her as upset but not panicked.

I asked him what it had been like for him.

“No, well, you never get used to these things, because people’s lives are . . .” he said. “But it’s just that I’ve seen quite a bit— Person Under, we call it—Man Under. I’m going to see these things as long as I’m with the department. You know, we’re dealing with nearly four million people riding a day; it really doesn’t bother me, I guess, unless there’s a *baby* involved.”

Through Officer Lampkins I had the clearest sensation of what it would be like to see a woman crouched under a subway platform, hemmed in by a subway train, and in deepest fear. Officer Lampkins is a black man, with the soft speech of Alabama. He is called the Sheriff by his fellow-officers. It occurred to me that a baby *had* been involved, in a way.

"In this case, she turns out to be pregnant," I said. "Although I think you didn't know that right away."

"I didn't find that out until later, when I notified her husband," Officer Lampkins said. "When we got her here"—to District 3 headquarters—"that's when she asked for me to call her husband, and that's when I called him, and that's when he asked me about the baby. I said, 'What baby?' He said, 'The baby.' And that's when I called my partner, Bauman, and I said, 'Did we leave a baby down there?' Then he"—the husband—"heard me saying it, and he said, 'No, she's pregnant.' I said, 'Oh.' That's when I found out she's pregnant. Well, you know, she had her coat on and stuff, and so we really weren't worrying about was she pregnant or not, we were worrying about getting her out, because we had to *crawl* out."

"What kind of a job is it to be on call this way?" I asked Officer Lampkins.

"To me it's a job," he said. "I'm here to do a job to protect life, and it's a job to me. It has no— I'm just on the job. Whatever it calls for me to do, I have to do. I have to do it."

One thing Officer Lampkins did not have to do, perhaps, but—with Officer Bauman—did do was go back on the tracks (the power was shut off a second time) to retrieve Miss Hobbs' shoe. In this context, "shoe" means footwear, and not subway hardware. "She started worrying about a shoe," Officer Lampkins said. "Ten or fifteen minutes after we notified the husband, and so on, that's when she began worrying about the shoe."

"You found her missing shoe?"

"That's right."

"And brought it back to her?"

"Yes."

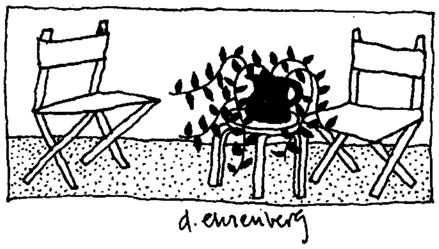
"And then you took her to the hospital."

"Not us. Emergency Medical took her to the hospital," Officer Lampkins said. "We took the *shoe* to the hospital. When we picked the shoe up, that's when we got back in the R.M.P. and went to the Columbia-Presbyterian hospital, where she was in the emergency room—took her her shoe there."

Officer Lampkins did not talk to Miss Hobbs at the hospital. "There were quite a few people around. We didn't want to get in the way," he told me. "Officer Bauman said, 'Look, we brought you your shoe.' She smiled, I know that much. She smiled, and we left, went back to patrol."

ON the day I interviewed Officer Lampkins, I hung around the transit-police station a bit. It's about in the middle of the concourse of the 145th Street station. The concourse is long and dark and low-ceilinged—almost a city block long. It makes you feel that something is weighing down on you; when you're in it, it's like being in a long, thin slice of something. When you walk in the door of the transit-police station, the world changes. It's a small, intense place. There is a desk at the door, where the officer in charge stands, and a green wooden bench opposite the desk. When Michelle Hobbs was brought here after she was rescued, she sat on the green bench. On the desk is a sign that any person sitting on the bench must see, which reads "Treat People As You Want to Be Treated." At the south end of the transit-police station, only a few yards from the desk and the bench, are two holding cells. When Frederick Nelson was arrested, he was put in the more northerly of these, and he was in this cell when Michelle Hobbs was brought here, but she may not know this. At the north end of the transit-police station, which is perhaps ninety feet long, there is a sitting-around area for officers and detectives. There is a television set here. Also, there are some desks, Captain Lopez's office—and that's about it. I talked to the sergeant—Nick Sciarabba—and to Captain Lopez. Sergeant Sciarabba said that one change from twenty years ago is that twenty years ago if you saw a person in the subway system who looked as if he were mentally unbalanced you could pull him in. "If he didn't know who the President of the United States was, you could commit him for *observation*, at least," he said.

"It wasn't quite that bad," Captain Lopez said. "I don't know. Maybe it's because the programs, the society itself . . ." He was trying to explain the incident to me. "We don't understand it," he said. The phone rang. "Captain Lopez," he said into it.



"That was one of the tests the doctors asked when we would bring them in," Sergeant Sciarabba said. "If someone was acting in a manner that was kind of strange—it didn't have to be dangerous to himself or others at that time, twenty years ago—they would ask him who the President was."

A WEEK after I talked to Officer Lampkins and the other officers, I interviewed Michelle Hobbs, at Babies Hospital, on Broadway at 166th Street, which is part of the Columbia-Presbyterian complex. She was having tests done to make sure her baby was all right; this was necessary because she had returned to work at her token booth on December 3rd—quite soon after the incident at the 145th Street station—and, perhaps owing to this, early one morning she had started to bleed. The doctors were worried that the baby might have become detached from the placenta and would have to be delivered early.

Michelle Hobbs had a delicate, musical voice, a very pretty voice. I asked her where she had been coming from on November 9th.

She said, "Well, I had just dropped off my eleven-month-old baby with my sister, who babysits for me. So I met her over at a Hundred and Forty-ninth and Third Avenue, and I caught the No. 19 bus over to Manhattan, so I could catch the A train straight up to the Transit Authority Clinic, on Two Hundred and Seventh Street, to be examined. And I was just standing there waiting for the train to go to the clinic when a man out of nowhere started to push me in front of a train."

"What were you thinking about?" I asked.

"Well, I was late. I was late to get to the clinic. I was looking at my watch thinking, Oh, my God, it's almost after ten, they tell you to get there before ten o'clock—*where is the train*? And I looked over and I saw a train coming, but it was a K train, and I'm like 'Oh God, where is the A train?' And I stepped back, and as I stepped back somebody just pushed me in. The first thing that came to my mind was somebody from the past that had a grudge against me and they just happened to see me and decided to shove me in. Then, I've been arguing with my husband. I said, 'Well?' The second thing that came to my mind was maybe it was him trying to kill me. And I just— As I was falling in, I kind of twisted my body to see who it was. And when I saw the guy I said, 'I don't know him.' And he was just walking off like nothing. I said to myself, 'Wow, it's just like I was a piece of garbage that was standing in his way and he just shoved me aside and kept going.' "

"Did you have an experience of falling?"

"Next thing I know, I was down on the rail and the train was coming. And I thought, Whoa, and then I noticed the little area underneath the platform, so I just crawled under there real quick, and I just stood there on my hands and knees until the train went by."

"And what were your thoughts then, or was it all too quick?"

"I was hoping that I was in far enough so that the train wouldn't hit me."

"And so you're under there . . ."

"As the train was coming, I was hoping that the train would just go by. You know, it would just go by, and I could crawl out and try to get back up on the platform. But I guess people waved down the train and made him stop and stay there. It was kind of scary as the train was just sitting there next to me, like '*Why won't it move*?' "

"Do you have good reflexes?"

"A cop told me that the other day. She said that I have very fast reflexes. I had gone back to work, and I was emptying the tokens into the pail, and she had just got off the train, so as I was bending down she put her hand out to snatch the pail, and I snatched it and jumped back. She said, 'Wow, you got fast reflexes. I expected you to jump and leave the pail there.' "

"You work for the Transit Authority?"

"Yes. I work as a token-booth clerk. I work up in the booth selling tokens, making change for the customers."

"How long have you done that?"

"Only five months."

"What did you do before that?"

"I was a C.R.T. operator working for American Express and MasterCard. I was where people would call in—like if they were in a restaurant or something and they wanted to use their credit card, the store would call to see if they had enough, and I would deny it or give them the O.K."

Miss Hobbs was born in Manhattan but lives in the Bronx, with her husband, James Copeland, a legal-records clerk; her little boy; and her six-year-old daughter. She went to Norman Thomas High School, in Manhattan, and Lehman High School, in the Bronx. Because she had worked for the Transit Authority for only five months at the time of the accident, she had accumulated very little paid sick leave: five days—one for each month she had worked—which she had already used. And so she went back to work early to pay bills and to get extra money for Christmas. On Sunday, December 13th, she got up at two in the morning to get to work by five. "All of a sudden, there was just blood pouring out of me," she said. "I had to call an ambulance, and I went straight to Jacobi, because they said that was the closest, but I really didn't like the hospital, so the next morning my mother-in-law came and got me and we took a cab straight over here."

"This is where you had your son?"

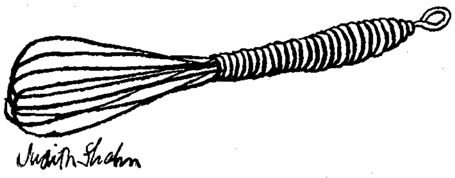
"Yes. And this is where I was after my accident."

"And now the doctors are checking . . ."

"At first, they thought that the placenta was blocking the cervix and they would have to give me a caesarean. But the ultrasound showed that that wasn't the problem. That's good. Now they think my placenta might be detached. If this problem clears up, everything will be a lot better. I've been trying hard, and even at the job sometimes they upset me, because everybody that sees me says, 'Why are you back to work? Why aren't you at home resting?' I say, 'Well, you know, I've been out a whole month, and I'm not getting paid.' "

I kept in touch with Miss Hobbs over the next weeks. After leaving Babies Hospital, she spent time at home resting. In January, she returned to work. On February 7th, she reëntered Babies Hospital and was delivered, by caesarean section, of a healthy son, who is named Jamil Khalid Copeland. As for the name "Khalid," in Arabic it means "everlasting," or "immortal," or "undying." Michelle Hobbs says that to her and her husband it means "survivor."

Frederick Nelson was arrested by four transit policemen—two detectives and two officers. Officer Stephen Tresca pursued him to the hot-dog stand; Detective Frank Schlimmer has been in charge of the case (from the Transit Police Department's point of view) ever since.



"My first meeting with Fred was when I handcuffed him at the top of the stairs," Detective Schlimmer says. "It appears that he was known in the vicinity around here as more or less a derelict type who might get a cup of coffee or a piece of cake for sweeping out around the concession stand. The address he gave to us at the time of arrest proved to be an improper address. Basically, that's it about him."

"He is a homeless man?" I asked.

"I don't know. He was a drifter-type individual. Sort of unkempt in appearance."

"What was he like at the time you arrested him?"

"From the moment I put cuffs on him, he was calm, cool, and collected."

The case of the People of the State of New York v. Frederick Nelson is laid out in a Voluntary Disclosure Form, which is a public document. The case bears the docket number 7N112540. Item 5c is a summary of statements made by Frederick Nelson to the officers and detectives who arrested him. It says:

(1) Defendant stated he hadn't pushed the woman or anyone else to the tracks.

(2) Defendant denied pushing complainant.

(3) Defendant stated he wasn't stupid enough to admit he had pushed woman onto the tracks.

(4) The defendant signed a written statement (attached). The defendant admitted he was only an inch from complainant when she went to the tracks.

When I picked up the Voluntary Disclosure Form from the District Attorney's office, the friendly woman who gave it to me said, "You got more than you bargained for." I think she meant that in this case there was a written statement attached to the form. Here it is:

11/9/87—1815

Statement of Frederick Nelson—Taken by Det. Frank C. Schlimmer

On this date, November 9, 1987 at around 10 A.M. I was at the W. 145th St "A" Subway Station. I went to that station because I sometimes help the old black man who works in the coffee place at that station. I take the garbage downstairs and he gives me a $1.00 (one dollar) and something to eat. When I went onto the platform, I saw the girl—she was a female/black about 27 years old, brn complexion, long hair, and she was wearing a long grey coat. When I first saw her, she came closer to me—she was scared and

> needed help—she moved close to the edge of the platform and God wanted me to help her. I reached out my hand, because she was walking away from me. I thought she had been drinking or was high on something. The lady needed help. I saw this, and I reached out with my right hand, to help her, but it was too late, she was flying through the air, she jumped off her feet. It was like she was in pain and needed help. She was near the edge of the platform, but I was too late. Her coat flew up in the air as she fell. My hand was out there. The train came right in there. I heard her screaming—But I said "The hell with it." I went upstairs to get a cup of coffee. As I went upstairs everyone was running. I just wanted a cup of coffee. Then a policeman snatched me away from the coffee stand and put me against the wall. I told him "I didn't push no girl on the platform." The hell with it!

The statement is signed by Detective Schlimmer and by Mr. Nelson.

Frederick Nelson is being held in a medical ward at Bellevue Hospital and has been ordered to undergo a psychiatric examination, and it may be that the case will not be tried. Miss Hobbs has said that she doesn't think she could ever identify the man who pushed her; she didn't recognize Frederick Nelson. There are two witnesses to the event. One stepped forward immediately and pointed out Mr. Nelson to Officer Tresca, who then ran up the stairs and grabbed him at the hot-dog stand. The other got in touch with the police later, and has also identified Mr. Nelson.

On the day I received the Voluntary Disclosure Form at the D.A.'s office and read Frederick Nelson's statement, I rode back up to the 145th Street subway station and went to the hot-dog stand where Mr. Nelson had been arrested. A light-skinned black man was in charge. He had hot dogs cooking on one of those heated-roller devices. A customer paid, and he threw the money—two dollar bills—on top of the open drawer of the cash register. I introduced myself. "I'm working on a story about a woman who was pushed off the platform," I said. "I hear the guy who did it sometimes hung out around here."

The man behind the counter said that his name was Eric Turner and that he had known Frederick Nelson for about six years. "And he was always homeless," he said. "Always appeared in the same clothes three or four weeks together."

A man standing at my left spoke up. He was in his mid-twenties; his left eye appeared to be half closed—the eyelid hung down. "I was in high school with him," this man said.

"What high school was that?" I asked.

"George Washington," he said.

"What sort of person was he?" I asked.

"He was a cool person before his accident; he got his face messed up. He wasn't always the person you see now."

"What accident was that?" I asked.

The man answered indirectly. "If you go down to a Hundred and Twenty-fifth Street between Eighth and St. Nicholas, you will find a lot of people who know him. He hung out down there."

"Between Eighth and St. Nicholas . . ."

"He was with this addict. He was going to leave him, so the addict threw acid in his face."

I asked the man to tell me his name.

"I told you where to go," he said.

Eric Turner said that Frederick Nelson had attacked with his fists a man who had pulled a gun on him. "A man pulled a gun on him right here," Eric Turner said. "And he *punched* the guy. Last year, I see him—he's got ulcers on his legs, wearing hospital shoes."

"AIDS, probably," the unnamed man said.

"He said ulcers," Eric Turner said.

I asked Eric Turner if it didn't seem strange that Mr. Nelson would push a person off a platform at a station where there were dozens of transit-police officers going to and fro.

"The only way he was going to clean up his act was if he went to jail," Mr. Turner said.

A shabby man in his twenties, with the long braided hairdo called dreadlocks, picked up a Snickers bar, showed it to Eric Turner, and paid with a dollar bill. He left.

"Derelicts and crazies, they always come right back," Eric Turner said.

"So Mr. Nelson came right back up here," I said.

"And ordered a cup of coffee."

—GEORGE W. S. TROW, JR.

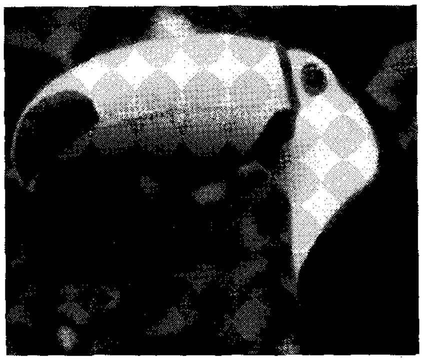
•

CLEAR DAYS ON THE MONA LISA SCENE

[*From the Elmira (N.Y.) Star-Gazette*]

Isabella, Duchess of Aragon, was da Vinci's original "Mona Lisa" model, but the artist referred to his own face to complete the work, computer artist Lillian Schwartz told the Rochester Democrat and Chronicle. Schwartz, who last year claimed the work was a self-portrait, amended her stand after seeing evidence in Glens Falls.

Sail The Ageless, Cageless Amazon.



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THE CURRENT CINEMA

The Lady from the Sea

EVERY now and then, I hear from young women who say that they want to write or direct movies but have no interest in car chases, coke busts, or shootouts. They want to make movies about personal relations and emotional states. Generally, I encourage them, while acknowledging my dread of the mess of vague, inchoate feelings that could be the result. I caution them that it takes more talent and more tough-mindedness to put a sensibility on the screen than it does to film a gunfight, and, lest they think that their desire is a specifically feminine one, I point out movies such as Kershner's "Loving," Alan Parker's "Shoot the Moon," Ichikawa's "The Makioka Sisters," and Satyajit Ray's "Days and Nights in the Forest" and "The Home and the World." But young women directors may be drawn to get at emotional states with less plot apparatus—almost nakedly.

Gillian Armstrong reports that when she began work on her new picture, "High Tide," she pinned a note above her desk: "Blood ties. Water. Running away." That note tells us what the movie is about more truthfully than a plot summary would. Shot from a script by Laura Jones, "High Tide" is a woman's picture in the way that "Stella Dallas" was—it's about the mother-daughter bond. But it's also a woman's picture in a new way: Gillian Armstrong, the Australian who directed "My Brilliant Career" at twenty-seven and then made "Starstruck" and "Mrs. Soffel," has the technique and the assurance to put a woman's fluid, not fully articulated emotions right onto the screen. And she has an actress—Judy Davis, the Sybylla of "My Brilliant Career" and the Adela Quested of David Lean's "A Passage to India"—who's a genius at moods.

As Lilli, one of three backup singers for a touring Elvis imitator, Judy Davis is contemptuous of the cruddy act, contemptuous of herself. Too smart for what she's doing, Lilli is a derisive tease—a spoiler. Feeling put down, the dumb-lug Elvis fires her, and she's left alone at the beginning of winter in a ramshackle beach town on the magnificent, windswept coast of New South Wales. There, stuck in the Mermaid Caravan Park while she tries to scrounge up the money to pay for repairs on her car, she encounters her teen-age daughter, Ally (Claudia Karvan).

When Lilli's young surfer husband died, she felt lost; she gave up the baby to her mother-in-law, Bet (Jan Adele), and has been drifting ever since, and getting stinko and passing out. Bet, a singer in talent shows at the local restaurant–night spot, who works at a fish-packing co-op and runs a soft-ice-cream stand, is a rowdy, belligerent woman, and she's devoted to Ally: Bet has taken care of her for thirteen years, but has no idea how unhappy the girl is—the rules Bet lays down to protect the kid cut her off from other kids and make her miserable. Lilli has an immediate rapport with the lonely Ally, even before she knows that Ally is her daughter, and after she knows, she can't take her eyes off the kid. When they're at the public baths at the same time, Lilli stares at Ally's legs under the stall door; Ally is shaving them, and Lilli stands there tranced out, sick with love and longing.

This remote, working-class, tourist-town Australia suggests a corrupted frontier settlement. The view of the cliffs and the sea includes the rusted debris of the caravan dwellers; the Mermaid is like the seedy trailer parks on the outskirts of American towns, but with a more pervasive sense of rootlessness and movement. The men and women, in their faded denims and cheap pastels, blend with the blue of the water. These people survive by changing their occupations with the seasons; they work hard in small businesses that look as if they had been thrown up out of packing crates. You see the crumminess of the town in the big, garish joint where the Elvis act is put on, and where Bet sings. (All the entertainers hit the same high decibel level.) An aging cowboy headliner called Country Joe (Bob Purtell) performs there against a backdrop of a huge bull's skull, and you get a taste of matey entertainment at a smoker, where Lilli earns the money she needs by doing a strip. You also see some less coarse men: Colin Friels as a fisherman who responds to Lilli's wry half smiles and likes her too much to watch her at the smoker, and Mark Hembrow as a garage mechanic who takes a chance on her and lets her have her car. Gillian Armstrong's style is crisp, and the camera whizzes past the scenic wonders, often turning rocks and road lines into abstractions. The superb cinematographer Russell Boyd chose to be his own camera operator this time—so he could have the excitement of giving Armstrong the fast tracking movement she wanted, and she could concentrate on the performances.

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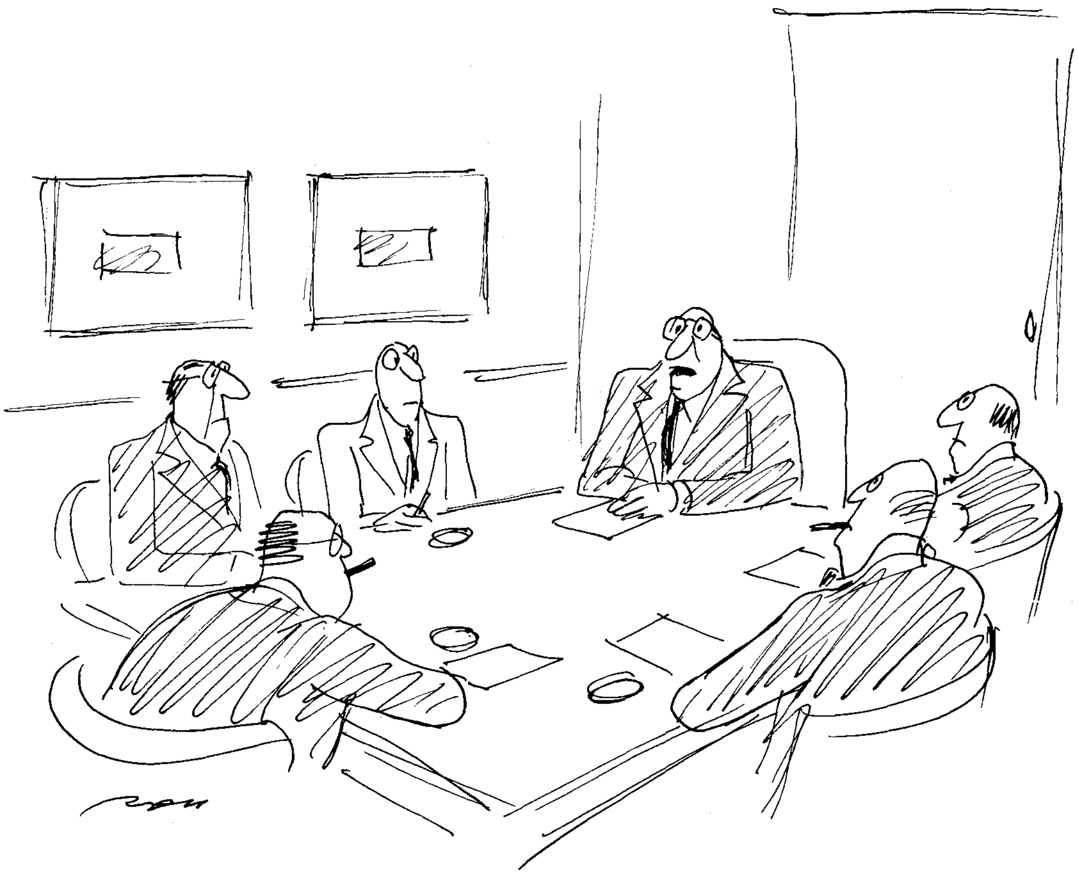
Lilli and her young teen-age daughter match up; you feel that they're true kin—they belong with each other. But their scenes together are courtship dances that Lilli keeps pulling back from, terrified of taking on the responsibility of motherhood when she hasn't been able to make it alone. You may intuit that her having abandoned the child who was her only hold on life is the reason she has trashed herself. She doesn't look at her failures that kindly, though. And Bet—piggy-faced and broad in the beam—tells her she's riffraff. At first, Bet seems threatening. It isn't until she has spent a night with Country Joe, and her steady fellow (John Clayton) has used his truck to ram Country Joe's fancy car, that we fully appreciate what a frank, lusty bawd she is. She wins us over when she seeks assurance from Country Joe that he feels the night with her was worth the damage to his car. Bet isn't a monster; she's simply the wrong person to be raising the slender, pensive Ally, whose emotions are hidden away, like her mother's. Even Bet's sensitivities are crude.

Jan Adele makes her film début as the overprotective Bet, but she's a former vaudevillian who has been in show biz since she was three, and has done everything from ballet in tent shows, through singing with bands, to TV comedy. All her experience informs her presence here; it's a real turn, and the fact that she acts in a totally different style from that of Judy



"We've lost our lease. Everything must go!"

Davis (and the fourteen-year-old Claudia Karvan) strengthens the movie. Jan Adele projects to the rafters; she hands you every emotion neatly tagged. She's marvellous at it; she gives you the sense that in this rough country Bet hasn't been exposed to much in the way of amenities, or subtleties, either. The drama is in our feeling that Lilli must not leave her daughter in the embrace of this raucous old trouper. Bet isn't in the spirit of the film.

Lilli is so overcast—so unsure of herself—that we feel a mystery in her, despite her level gaze. Tall, skinny, red-haired Judy Davis was only twenty-three when she played her first leading role onscreen—in "My Brilliant Career," in 1979. She may never have looked as beautiful as she does here in a motel-room scene with Colin Friels: he's lying on the bed, and she's standing by the window with her wavy hair wet from the shower. She's like a sea goddess. The first time we see her in this movie, she's on the stage in a tawdry mermaid dress of sequins and ruffles. The first time we see Ally, she's in the water, floating in a tidal pool; then she gets on her father's old surfboard—surfing is her refuge from the noisy junkiness of life with Bet. And the sight of the sea is mucked up by what people have done to the coast.

Gillian Armstrong and her scenarist don't connect the dotted lines, and you don't want them to. I expected more to go on between Lilli and the Colin Friels character, maybe because Davis has a special serenity with Friels (he's her husband), but the script doesn't build on this accord. That's a small matter; so is Lilli's unnecessary waffling at the end. The movie's emotional suggestiveness may be off-putting to some people; they may be so trained to expect action that they'll complain that not enough is going on. But a great many young women are likely to feel that this is the movie they've wanted to make. (Some of them have already made pieces of it; the humiliation of the striptease has been the subject of many women film students' shorts.) The acute, well-written script acknowledges the basic ineffableness of some experiences, especially in a self-conscious scene toward the end where Lilli tries to explain to Ally why she deserted her. And it all goes together. It goes with the way Lilli looks when she's about to leave town and abandon her daughter for the second time; paying off the garage mechanic and thanking him, she's white as death. Judy Davis has been compared with Jeanne Moreau, and that's apt, but she's Moreau without the cultural swank, the high-fashion gloss. And there's no movieish gloss here, either. Men don't mistreat Lilli, and she doesn't mistreat them. She just screws herself over, and the film's only question is, Will she stop?

• •

LOUIS MALLE's "Au Revoir les Enfants" (or "Goodbye, Children") is set in Occupied France in 1944, when Malle was an eleven-year-old at a Catholic boys' boarding school near Fontainebleau that sheltered several Jewish boys. The Gestapo learned they were there, and sent the ones they found to Auschwitz, and the headmaster to a work camp. One of the Jewish boys was in Malle's class, but Malle didn't get to know him well and didn't realize that he was Jewish. For the dramatic purposes of the movie, he has conceived a close friendship between his alter ego, the fair-haired Julien Quentin (Gaspard Manesse), and the dark boy who is using the false name Jean Bonnet (Raphaël Fejtö). Malle has every right to fantasize and invent, but I'm puzzled by the kind of fantasizing he does here. The first half of the film is so hushed and enervated that I kept peering into the schoolyard looking for signs of life. It's full of wealthy boys at play; they're even there on stilts, battling and falling down. But their games—which might clue us in to their ruling-class assumptions and their snobbery and the limits of their understanding—are shown at a distance. The camera is so discreet it always seems about ten feet too far away, and the boy who plays Julien is directed so that he never engages us; we can't look into him, or into anyone else.

As the story is presented, Julien, who is quick, grasps almost at once that this new boy, Jean Bonnet, is an impostor, who isn't really Catholic;

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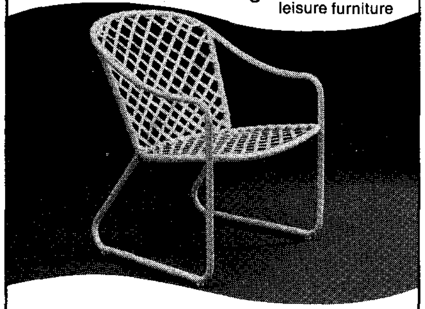

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Julien catches Jean standing by his bed at night, praying silently, with two lighted candles, and Julien rummages in Jean's books and discovers that his real name is the German-sounding Jean Kippelstein. Julien is the only boy in the class who offers Jean friendship; the others play tricks on Jean and gang up on him, because he's different—he's not one of them. Julien, who knows how different Jean actually is, keeps his discovery to himself. He and Jean are the two brightest boys in the class; they both love to read, and they become best friends. This is a rather moist fantasy of Julien's virtue; it's eventually mixed with a fantasy self-accusation of guilt. When the Gestapo chief comes into the classroom asking for Jean Kippelstein, the scared, nervous Julien involuntarily turns and looks at his friend—it's a Judas kiss, but an unintentional one. And Jean exonerates him: when he is packing his gear to go with the Gestapo men, he tells Julien that it didn't matter, that the Nazis would have caught him anyway.

In the finest scene of the movie, Jean shakes hands with the boys near him just before he's taken away; it's a well-brought-up young boy's leave-taking, and nothing has prepared you for it. But throughout Jean is used as an aesthetic object—spiritual, sensitive, foreign. He's often shot in profile, with his lips parted, and in one scene he goes to Mass with the other boys and tilts his face, openmouthed—almost yearning—to receive the holy wafer, which is denied him by the Reverend Father, the headmaster. Is the boy merely seeking acceptance by the other boys—is he just trying to pass as one of them—or is something else implied? The whole movie seems padded and muted; it's designed to make you understand that Julien is stricken by the horror of what happens to his friend. But nothing in it comes into clear focus—not the boys' attitudes, not even the images (and certainly not a lengthy sequence in which the two boys are on a treasure hunt in Fontainebleau Forest).

Malle has said that this is the most personal and important film of his career, and I believe that he thinks that. I also believe that he's wrong. He covered some of the same material in "Murmur of the Heart," and Francine Racette, who plays Julien's mother, has a facial resemblance to Léa Massari, who was the mother in "Murmur," but the sensuality and vivacity have been drained out of the character. At the beginning, when Julien's mother kisses him goodbye at the train station in Paris, she doesn't want him to go any more than he wants to leave her; her lipstick mark on his forehead could be an impudent, funny image—it could have associations—if the scene weren't so inert. Later, when she visits Fontainebleau and takes her older son, who's a senior at the school, and Julien and his friend Jean Bonnet out to dinner, and the older boy suggests that the Wehrmacht officers at the next table who reprimanded a loudmouthed, anti-Semitic militiaman were doing it to impress her, you think, Why? She hasn't been seductive; she hasn't even smiled. Malle keeps the characters straitjacketed. If "Au Revoir" is very personal to him, this may be because as an adult he has felt stricken by the recognition that he wasn't stricken then, and it may involve his feelings of guilt over his own family's safety and prosperity—everything that the film barely touches on.

Malle has said of "Au Revoir," "I reinvented the past in the pursuit of a haunting and timeless truth." Maybe that's why I felt as if I were watching a faded French classic, something I dimly recalled. I felt that way especially during the near-replay of Malle's "Lacombe, Lucien" in the scenes that involve Joseph (François Négret), a lame orphan boy who works at the school as a kitchen helper and is discharged for some petty black marketeering. It's Joseph, trying to get even with the headmaster for throwing him out and to set himself up with the Gestapo, who is the informer. In pursuit of haunting and timeless truth, Malle has gone back to the anti-Nazi movies of the forties, and polished and formalized the actions until he's turned melodrama into polite reverie.

Yes, it gets to you by the end. How could it not? But you may feel pretty worn down—by how accomplished it is, and by all the aching, tender shots of Jean. He's photographed as if he were a piece of religious art: Christ in his early adolescence. There's something unseemly about the movie's obsession with his exotic beauty—as if the French-German Jews had come from the far side of the moon. And does he have to be so brilliant, and a gifted pianist, and courageous? Would the audience not mourn him if he were just an average schmucky kid with pimples?

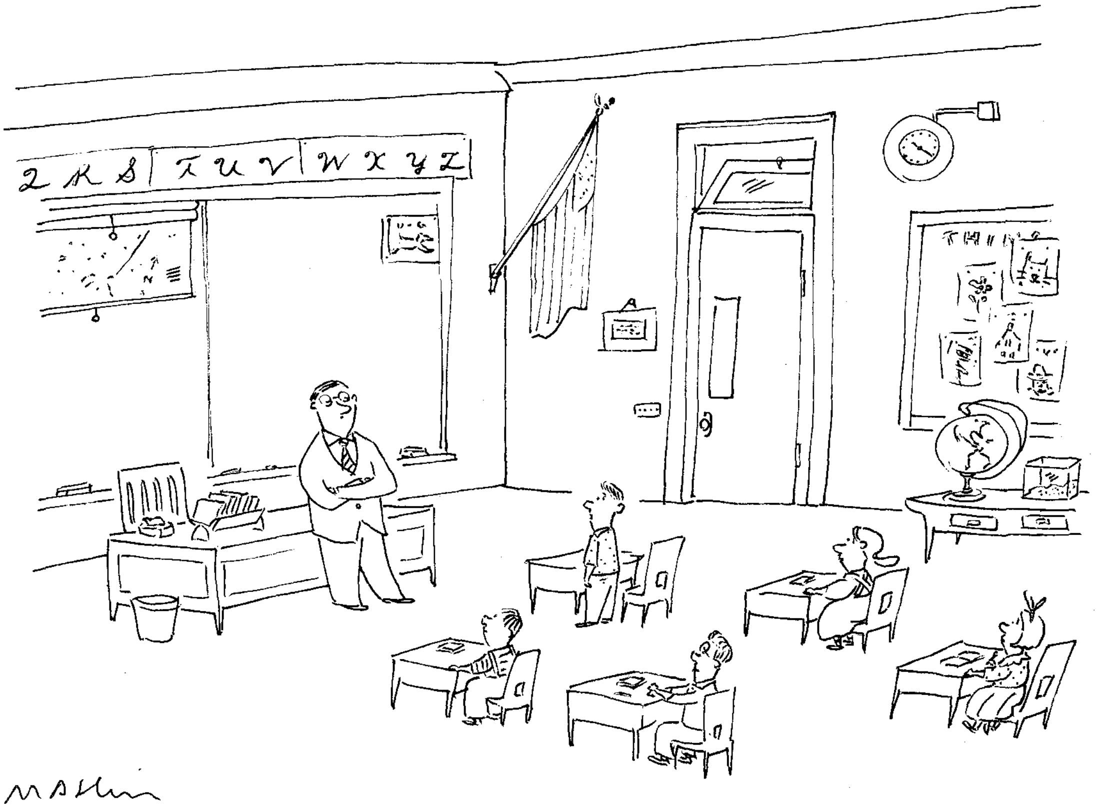
—PAULINE KAEL

LETTER FROM EUROPE

PARIS, FEBRUARY 10

MY favorite French novelist is a thirty-one-year-old veterinarian named Olivier Dutaillis. I met Olivier through my dog, Romeo. Olivier takes care of Romeo—that is, whenever Olivier is not off somewhere writing novels, and his clinic on the Rue Mazet is open. Actually, it is a friend's clinic, but Olivier's friend is also something of a literary man, and frequently disappears, like Olivier, for several months and writes a book about trout (he is a fly-fisherman) or an encyclopedia of fishing. This means that the two veterinarians spend a lot of time looking for replacements who don't write anything but prescriptions. It is difficult. In France, nearly everybody writes books, or wants to write books, or writes about writing books. Certainly everyone believes in the magic status of the *homme de lettres*. The book critic for *L'Express*—his name is Angelo Rinaldi, and he is also a novelist—says that in France "*le chemin de la gloire passe par la littérature,*" and that is true. Even Napoleon started off with a novel, and supposedly Napoleon himself said that he had more to fear from Mme. de Staël's pen than from Wellington's army. He was wrong about Wellington, but it is hard to think of a leader here since Napoleon who has not said something like it. French leaders write prophylactically, accumulating words like weapons. François Mitterrand writes, and when he is not writing he takes up literature by association. He has himself photographed with Montaigne's essays on his lap, or in conversation with William Styron. (Styron is one of Mitterrand's official Friends of the President, along with Sam Fuller and Gabriel García Márquez.) Sometimes he gets into the Élysée helicopter and flies to a château in Champagne for lunch with Françoise Sagan and a few other literary friends who, with the President, make up a sort of Violet Trefusis fan club. His predecessor, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, preferred Emmanuel Bove and Guy de Maupassant. Giscard launched his last campaign by going on television and talking about Maupassant, and there are people who believe that he lost the Presidency because his literary scholarship was shaky.

I know from Olivier that in France being a veterinarian is nearly as prestigious as being a writer. The big veterinary school outside Paris is a *grande école*, like the École Nationale d'Administration and the École Normale Supérieure, whereas the medical school is just an ordinary branch of the University of Paris, and Olivier likes to divide his year between professions, spending six months with his novels and six months with the neighborhood dogs and cats. He has tried to avoid the seductions and corruptions of literary celebrity available to a friendly Parisian bachelor who has already published two good books, signed with Gallimard, made it into what could be called the "eulogy column" on the front page of the book section of *Le Monde* ("Dutaillis . . . seduces with the elegance of his pen . . . with a politesse which does not exclude—far from it—profundity"), and sold an option on his last novel to the movies. He does not take jobs writing enthusiastic reviews of his publisher's other novels. He does not take jobs reading manuscripts in order to recommend the novels of people who enthusiastically review him. He is a personable young man. He is slim and lively, and he has a funny French nose and a head of curly dark hair, and he is nearly always smiling and gesturing and talking. He would make *un bon Pivot*, as the French say—meaning that he would easily charm the six or seven million Frenchmen who watch Bernard Pivot's literary talk show, "Apostrophes," on Antenne II Friday nights and then go out and buy thirty or forty thousand books on Saturday morning. He likes performing. He comes from a show-business Paris family. He was raised in what I would call the vaudeville bourgeoisie. His mother used to be an actress. His brother plays the piano. His girlfriend acts and dances. His father writes songs, and his mother writes dialogue, and the two of them have invented a radio program—a kind of mystery soap opera in which the audience calls in once a week with the answers. Like most Parisians, Olivier is a little eccentric. He likes pretending. He called his last novel "Le Simulateur"—it is a wonderful hall-of-mirrors story about a normal young man pretending to be


Q R S T U V W X Y Z

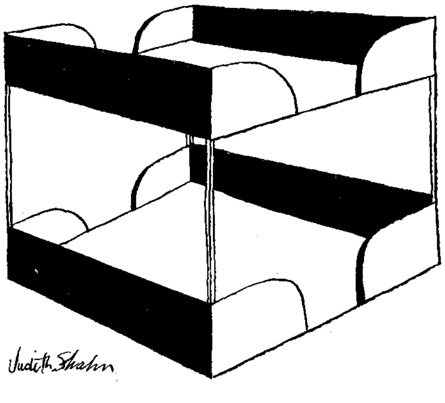
"If I may, Mr. Perlmutter, I'd like to answer your question with *a question."*

crazy (he wants to get out of military service) and a crazy military nurse pretending to be normal—and, in fact, he is something of a *simulateur* himself. He says that the great pleasure of dropping out to write a novel is knowing that most of his friends from the dog-and-cat world have no idea of where he goes or what he does there—and probably would never guess if they tried.

Olivier's first novel was about a professor who sleeps with a girl from his course on Pico della Mirandola and, when she leaves him, pours his troubles into the memory of a sympathetic word processor he names Chouquette. Olivier calls it a love story. He himself can barely type, and it was only this year that he even thought about trying a computer. But one day, not long after his book appeared, it was announced that Olivier Dutaillis had been appointed to the jury of an important literary prize called the Prix de la Littérature Micro-Informatique—the grand prize of computer books. Two days later, a sack of books arrived. The books were so complicated that Olivier couldn't even read the titles, but he pretended. He says it was his only lapse into corruption. He was twenty-eight then, and he was starting one of his half years at the typewriter, with only some savings and whatever money he could pick up cat-sitting to see him through. He knew from the papers that most literary juries do their deliberating at free lunches in famous restaurants—the Prix Goncourt judges, for example, eat at Drouant, and the Prix Interallié judges go to Lasserre—and it happened that the Prix de la Littérature Micro-Informatique was one of those juries. People from the Prix de la Littérature Micro-Informatique ate at Josephine, a Left Bank bistro with such a fine cellar of Bordeaux that people have been conspiring to meet there since before the war. Olivier doesn't remember much about the books discussed at his lunches at Josephine. He remembers the wines and the truffled eggs and the *mille-feuilles*, and he remembers how enthusiastic everybody was and how one of the real computer scientists on the jury—there were not many—offered to computerize the wine list. But he learned a lot about how literary juries work, and he met another novelist, who didn't know what he was doing on the jury, either. The novelist figured it had something to do with his having bought a word processor for his last book.

THERE are fifteen hundred literary prizes in France. Olivier has already won one of them—he won something called the Prix de la Psychiatrie Française for his book about being crazy—and he was nominated for another prize, the Prix des Lectrices d'Elle, by ten thousand *Elle* subscribers from Nancy, including a florist, a retired baker, and the wife of a famous soccer player. The French love literary prizes. I have heard of a prize for the best poetry written in Nanterre and a prize for the best Dijon novel and a prize for the best book about flowers in Toulouse. Most people date this national passion for prizes from 1635 (which was the year Cardinal Richelieu persuaded Louis XIII that the future of civilization lay in proper French usage, and would best be served by an Académie Française of experts in gerunds and subjunctives and in what verbs take what prepositions), because since 1635 half the towns and villages of provincial France have come up with their own small versions of the Cardinal's Académie, and each of them has a jury of local notables who eat lunch together once a month and give a prize to a writer. The Académie Française, of course, gives its own prize—the Grand Prix du Roman de l'Académie Française. So does an Egyptian billionaire by the name of Muhammad al-Fayed. Every year, Muhammad al-Fayed throws a big party at the Ritz—he owns the Ritz—and before the champagne and caviar, the television crews arrive and Pierre Salinger presents the winner of the Ritz Paris Hemingway Award with a check for fifty thousand dollars.

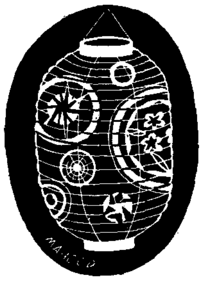
The prize that French writers really covet is the prize of the academy that Edmond de Goncourt founded in memory of his brother Jules—the Prix Goncourt. The check for the Goncourt comes to fifty francs. It was worth five thousand gold pieces when Edmond died, in 1896, but now it amounts to a little over ten dollars, and most people who receive it frame it and hang it up and never cash it. It could be said that from a literary point of view the honor is as small as the check, inasmuch as it is negotiated by a jury of men and women who are writers themselves and are practically, if not professionally, attached to the people who publish *their* books, and to the idea of pleasing those people. But everyone wants a Goncourt, and the reason is that in any ordinary year the day a Goncourt novel is announced, and the novel gets its bright-red "Prix Goncourt" band—a kind of paper book belt which is printed that day in Paris at the rate of a hundred thousand an hour—the book starts selling. It can sell a thousand copies a day, or five thousand, or even ten thousand. It can make its author and its publisher millionaires. People in France are so sure of this that the French almanac, *Quid*, prints a Goncourt-sales forecast (from a hundred and twenty thousand to five hundred thousand copies within a year of the prize, not counting book-club sales or *livres de poche*, which are the French equivalent of paperbacks) the way it prints the yearly weather forecast or the national crop forecast. And when a Goncourt writer disappoints them, the way a novelist named Michel Host disappointed them two years ago, when he won the prize and his book sold only eighty thousand copies, they say the writer made *un mauvais Goncourt*, as if he had let the country down by not producing a real best-seller.



A Prix Goncourt is about money. This is what distinguishes the Goncourt from the important literary prizes in England and America, which tend to have more to do with reputation than royalties. The Goncourt is a celebration of the art of selling books, and has very little to do with the art of writing good ones—except, as one French critic put it years ago, "because of some misunderstanding." (Hervé Bazin, the president of the Académie Goncourt, and also a novelist, calls this acknowledging "a certain relation between writing and society.") No one denies that good novelists, and even great novelists, occasionally win a Goncourt. André Malraux won a Goncourt, and Michel Tournier won a Goncourt, and so did Julien Gracq. Gracq has always resisted celebrity (Julien Gracq is a pseudonym), and he refused the Goncourt. Tournier, on the other hand, worked very hard to get one. When Bernard Pivot read his book—it was “The Ogre”—in August and started calling it the next Goncourt, Tournier left the country on his publisher’s advice, so as not to “peak” too soon and put off the jury. He stayed away until November. Charles de Gaulle died that November, and people were sad and not buying as many books, and Tournier often complains that de Gaulle’s death cost him fifty to a hundred thousand sales.

The Goncourt jury sat for the first time in 1903—when Edmond’s relatives stopped contesting the will and the estate was settled—and in 1919 the judges gave the prize to a book that only one of them really liked. It was Proust’s “Within a Budding Grove.” Goncourt judges always talk about Proust. They say “1919” with the same reverence they say “1914,” which was the year they started eating in a private room at Drouant and ordered the Goncourt silverware—a *couvert* for each judge, engraved with the judge’s name and eventually with the names of his successors—appropriate to their high literary mission and to the fresh foie gras, the *bain de homard*, and the saddle of venison that soon became the standard Goncourt menu. They believe that no one in Paris had heard of Marcel Proust before he got his Goncourt, although Proust campaigned shamelessly for the prize, and wrote a lot of letters, and went out—and was discussed everywhere. (A writer named Jean Richard, who was a schoolboy in 1919, wrote in his diary that he had it on the authority of a friend whose mother knew Proust that the man was “*un pédé qui couche avec son chauffeur*,” and added, for posterity, that his father was furious.) They like to compare their list, genius for genius, with the Nobel list. For the record, France has produced more Nobel literature laureates than any other country (among them Anatole France, André Gide, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Claude Simon) and none of those writers ever won a Prix Goncourt. Sartre, of course, refused the Nobel Prize, but some years later he asked for his money. Stockholm said no.

In France, books are like flowers or chocolates. They are presents. Books are what you give your grandmother at Christmas, or the doctor who operated on your grandmother. Olivier says that you do not take chances with your grandmother. You go to the bookstore and buy the book with the bright-red band, because you know that that book will be appropriate—easy for Grandmother to get through and not too taxing, not too avant-garde, nothing to put Grandmother off you. You expect it to be “literary” in a safe, respectable, titillating way. You buy it the way you would buy an old, comfortable brand of soap flakes or a packaged cheese. This is what the French mean when they call someone *Goncourable*—they mean a writer on his way to becoming a lucrative, literary brand name. Goncourt novelists are the *Vache Qui Rit* of the literary world. They are so automatically accepted—they make so much money and get so much attention—that they move from *Goncourable* to *Nobelisable* in the book pages of the Paris papers. Sometimes, the novelists believe this. Yann Queffélec, a well-placed young book reviewer who won the Goncourt in 1985 for a truly terrible novel about rape and incestuous obsession called “The Wedding,” tells his admirers, “After the Goncourt, there is nothing left for me but the Nobel Prize.”



ALL French writers know how to be *Goncourable*. They are born knowing. They know the critics to cultivate, the jobs to take, the rules to bend, and the rules to follow, and they follow those rules with an alarming innocence—something which never fails to offend the foreigners who write here. The first rule involves publishers. A writer who wants to be *Goncourable* is expected to publish at Gallimard, Grasset, or Éditions du Seuil. Gallimard—along with Mercure de France, which it owns—has won nineteen Goncourts since the war, and between them Grasset and Seuil account for eleven more. In the prize trade these three publishers are known as Galligrasseuil. Other publishers complain about their monopoly. Other publishers say that the literary-prize system is corrupt, and that the various juries are owned and accountable, like jockeys—whereas the people at Galligrasseuil call this a harmless, and even a benevolent, corruption, because one best-seller can support a list of unread masterpieces or keep the bookstore that stocks those masterpieces from going under. It is hard for Galligrasseuil to understand why everyone complains about their winning three-quarters of the Goncourts when together they publish three-quarters of the country’s fiction.

A year ago, the publishers Pierre Belfond and Robert Laffont protested. They took out a page in *Libération* to talk about the Galligrasseuil monopoly—“*Pour une morale des prix littéraires*,” it began. They said that in the past twenty-five years “the Gang of Three” (M. Belfond always refers to his colleagues at Gallimard, Grasset, and Seuil as the Gang of Three) had won the Prix Goncourt eighteen times, and the other important literary prizes even more—the Prix Renaudot twenty-one times, the Prix Interallié twenty-one times, the Prix Médicis twenty-one times, and the Prix Fémina twenty-four. As for the occasional off years—the years when somebody else’s novelists won prizes—those years were “alibis.” They were there to maintain the fiction that France’s literary juries were independent.

It is true that when Parisians talk about prizes they usually talk about publishers, and not writers. They say, for instance, that Seuil got this year’s Goncourt, or that Grasset got the Renaudot—giving some weight to M. Belfond’s thesis that the writers involved in this literary spoils system are interchangeable, and the publishers are not. The publishers court juries. Olivier, for example, moving into the ranks of the *Goncourable*, had to inscribe a copy of “Le Simulateur” to every judge on every literary jury in Gallimard’s files—the only advantage to himself, as far as he can tell, being that now he can keep fairly accurate track of his reputation by prowling around in secondhand bookstores counting how many judges have unloaded the book for pocket money and—by checking the inscriptions—which judges they were. Mainly, though, French publishers feel that the matter of prizes is too delicate to be left entirely to amateurs like Olivier. Most big publishers here employ somebody whose job includes looking after book critics and prize judges (they are usually the same people), and Grasset has an editor whose only job seems to be looking after them.

Some editors miss the old days,

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when the approach was simple. They tell a story about a critic from *Figaro* who produced *Goncourable* reviews for the price of a good lunch and a couple of five-hundred-franc notes wrapped discreetly in his napkin. Today, the approach is complicated. The way a publisher courts a critic or a judge today is by keeping him honestly employed, writing prefaces, say, or reading manuscripts or editing a collection, or—and this is the best way—by publishing his own novels. Then, there is the ritual I have heard referred to as literary visiting. Publishers visit. The Prix Médicis, which is considered the most literary of the literary prizes, because it often goes to books no one understands, was sponsored by a Russian émigrée named Gala Barbisan, who had married a rich but tiresome Italian and wanted *interesting* visitors. Mme. Barbisan apparently had two obsessions. She disliked Jews and she liked chess—and consequently she favored the editors and publishers who shared those obsessions. (She had to compromise in the end, because it turned out that most of the good chess-playing editors here were Jewish.) Then, there are the Prix Fémina judges, most of them elderly women under the patronage of the dowager Duchesse de la Rochefoucauld. The Prix Fémina was founded in 1904 by twenty-two *collaboratrices* on a magazine called *Vie Heureuse.* They were incipient feminists. They took a look at the new Académie Goncourt, saw that there were no women judges, concluded that there would be no women laureates, either, and started giving their own prizes. They ended up giving two-thirds of them to men. The doyenne of the Fémina was an actress named Simone who retired from the jury, under some pressure, at the age of a hundred, and lived to a hundred and eight. She had plenty of time for visitors.

According to the almanac, *un gros Fémina*—a really big Fémina—can mean a hundred and fifty thousand sales, and publishers say that a Fémina vote can turn on the matter of a forgotten birthday or a neglected baptism or an inattentive lunch. *Un gros Renaudot* is worth about the same sales, and it is much less trouble, because the Renaudot judges are book critics and reporters—in the business, so to speak—and the prize itself is really a kind of Goncourt doppelgänger. It is decided amiably, over drinks, the night before the Goncourt meets, and is announced at lunch right after the Goncourt announcement—the gentleman's agreement being that if both juries like the same novel the Renaudot judges will back down and supply a substitute. (The understanding is that it is not good for the book business to let one novel get two prizes.) This rarely happens anyway. By the time the Goncourt jury formally convenes, at noon on the second Monday in November, everyone in the business seems to know what book is going to win, and the other juries have made their choices accordingly.

The only prize given before the Goncourt is the Grand Prix du Roman de l'Académie Française. It used to be given later, but the Academicians, who are still referred to here as "the Immortals," objected in principle to the idea of following anyone, citing as precedent the fact that people from the Académie Française sit "higher" at table than people from the Académie Goncourt. A Grand Prix du Roman is not worth much by Goncourt standards—say, fifty thousand copies—though getting one is a sensible, if not essential, thing to do if you want to be elected to the Académie Française. This makes for a peculiar list of laureates, with writers like Mauriac, Saint-Exupéry, Bernanos, Tournier, and Albert Cohen on the one hand, and on the other historians and philosophers who have dutifully produced novels that read at best like dissertations with plots and at worst like curricula vitae. Most novelists prefer the money from a Goncourt. There are *Goncourable* novelists who plot *not* to get the Grand Prix du Roman, and a couple of years ago one novelist actually refused it, preferring to take his chances on the Goncourt (and, as one of his rivals put it, "go for the money").

Twenty-two years ago, the novelist François Nourissier won a Grand Prix du Roman and accepted it graciously, even though at the time he was eminently *Goncourable*, and people in Paris still talk about the sacrifice Nourissier made and how graciously he made it. Nourissier is indeed a gracious man, and he happens to be a fine writer. He is now, by way of compensation, the secretary-general of the Académie Goncourt. He gets to announce the prize in November, and he gets to leak the voting lineup during the various rounds of selection and elimination, so that the press stays interested and more novelists sell more books. Nourissier is often described as the perfect Paris man of letters, because he not only writes novels but votes for novels and reviews novels (he is a critic for *Le Point* and *Figaro Magazine*). When he was on the *comité de lecture* at Grasset—he left officially in 1973, and says that now he has "*une influence fantomatique*"—he also decided which novels got published. There are people here who disapprove of M. Nourissier's career, but not many. Most people feel that anyone who likes books so much that he works to persuade his friends to publish them, reviews them warmly, and then votes to give them prizes is an enthusiast in the best French literary tradition.

CONFLICT of interest—literary or financial—is not a concept that many people here acknowledge. A country that sold guns to Libya at the same time it was at war with Libya in Chad—with the explanation that the guns Libyans were using to shoot French soldiers were not the same guns the French had sold them—is not a country to quibble over the ethics of literary prizes. What shocks the French is disrespect for the process. People were shocked last fall, for example, when Angelo Rinaldi wrote what for France was an exceptionally harsh review of a book many of them expected to win the Goncourt—it was a book called "La Nuit Sacrée," and it did win—and they were especially shocked because a book of Rinaldi's was also on the Goncourt short list. (Rinaldi is a very influential critic. He likes Flannery O'Connor and Edmund Wilson, but he has not liked many French writers since Flaubert, and it is rumored that every time he writes a novel he is "promised" a Goncourt, in the hope that the attention will persuade him to adjust his standards.) Most of what passes for book criticism here is really publicity—one French writer praising another, who will of course praise him. In fact, most French criticism of any kind is publicity. People here have been so confident for so long, so accustomed to the idea of being sharper, smarter, deeper, more elegant, more eloquent, more discerning, and certainly more civilized than anybody else, that it has made them provincial, listening mainly to each other and in the end whistling in the dark against failure. Critics practice praise as a kind of national trust, the way they used to practice criticism (which makes it hard for anyone to know what books to buy or what plays to see or what movies to stand in line in the rain for). This is considered part of the process of defending French culture, just as giving prizes is part of the process. No one I know in Paris approved of Rinaldi's bad review—they said it was not *le fair play*—except Rinaldi. The only real encouragement Rinaldi got was in *L'Express*, in a piece he supposedly wrote himself under the initials A.H.

Part of the pleasure of the Goncourt season is this sort of scandal. Rinaldi's review was 1987's scandal. Host's *mauvais Goncourt* was 1986's. In 1984, when Marguerite Duras won a Goncourt for "The Lover," her thirty-seventh, and by no means best, book (it was said that the Goncourt "needed Duras," after a run of exceptionally mediocre winners), there was the scandal of Mme. Duras's party. Actually, the scandal was that there was no party. Mme. Duras's publisher, Jérôme Lindon—an old-fashioned intellectual whose list at Éditions de Minuit includes Samuel Beckett, Nathalie Sarraute, and Claude Simon, and who has no interest at all in French literary prizes—did not lay in champagne and caviar and open his office to the judges. He simply came to his door on the Rue Bernard-Palissy, said "*Merci beaucoup*" to the people waiting for their refreshment on the sidewalk, and went back to work.

The fact is that the academicians of the Prix Goncourt do not like looking foolish. There are ten Goncourt judges. They are elected for life, by one another. Only two of them have won the Goncourt, the tradition being that once elected you are no longer *Goncourable*, but otherwise they have cornered the market. Among them, they have won the Grand Prix du Roman de la Ville de Paris, the Grand Prix du Roman de l'Académie Française, the Prix Apollinaire, the Prix des Lecteurs, the Prix Prince Pierre de Monaco, the Grand Prix d'Humour Noir, the Grand Prix International de Poésie, the Prix Albert Olivier, the Prix de la Nouvelle, the Prix Sainte-Beuve, the Prix Max Jacob, the Prix du Livre Inter, the Prix Renaudot, the Prix International du Souvenir, the Grand Prix Littéraire de la Ville de Bordeaux, the Prix Fémina, the Prix des Librairies, the Prix de l'Académie Charles Cros, the Prix de l'Académie du Disque Français, the Prix Fénéon, the Prix de la Guilde du Livre, the Grand Prix du Roman Populiste, the Prix du Portique, and the Plume d'Or du Figaro. The judges run a gamut from Michel Tournier to Edmonde Charles-Roux, a former *Vogue* editor who won a Goncourt in 1966 for a novel that was memorable mainly for having Carmine de Sapio in its cast of characters—and who, after what the French call "an interesting past," married Gaston Defferre, the Mayor of Marseilles and Mitterrand's first Minister of the Interior. The youngest judge is fifty-seven and the two oldest are nearly eighty, and the Goncourt has made them all pundits. They are hard put to it to appreciate the humor when a disappointed book lover throws a cream tart in the face of their secretary-general or empties a bottle of ketchup on Michel Tournier's famous head. That was in 1977—the year the prize went to Didier Decoin, a writer who was clearly controversial, though no one now remembers why—but it was certainly not the most humiliating Goncourt year. The most humiliating year—the year the judges usually refuse to talk about—was 1975. In 1975, the novelist Romain Gary won a Goncourt. He already had one Goncourt—he won it in 1956, for "The Roots of Heaven"—but by 1975 he may have wanted another, and since no one is supposed to win the Goncourt twice he got it by inventing a novelist called Émile Ajar, introducing him around Paris (in the person of a young cousin, whose real name was Paul Pavlowitch), and writing two good novels in Ajar's name. The second novel won the Goncourt. It was called "The Life Before Us," and it did better than Gary's Goncourt nov-

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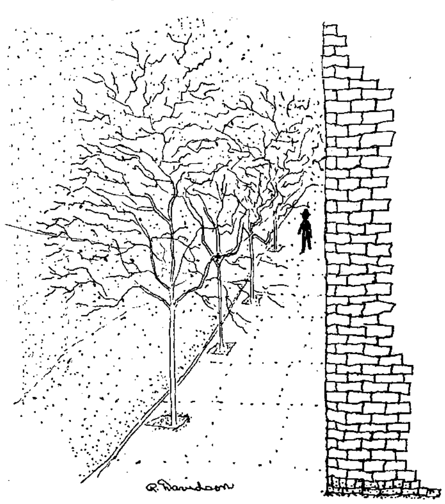
el. It even did better than Proust's Goncourt novel—it sold more copies in five years than "Within a Budding Grove" had sold in sixty. In fact, it sold more copies than any Goncourt novel besides "Man's Fate."

A lot of Goncourt novels are like that—they come with their own stories, which are often much more interesting than the stories they tell. André Schwarz-Bart, who won the Goncourt in 1959 for "The Last of the Just," never wrote a book again, and Jean Carrière, who won in 1972 for a book called "L'Épervier de Maheux," took fifteen years to recover from the fact that it had sold three-quarters of a million copies, and when he did recover it was with a book about how the Goncourt had ruined his work, wrecked his marriage, and driven him to drink and drugs and dreams of suicide and, finally, to a breakdown. The Goncourt carries so much celebrity, so much hyperbole, so many illusions that it is not hard to imagine someone staring at a blank page for the next fifteen or twenty years. People fight for the Goncourt. They politic and pressure and manipulate and maneuver as if the judges were idiots, and then, when they get their Goncourt, they decide that the judges were geniuses. M. Lindon, who never sends his authors' books to judges, says that to his mind the only relevant question about a literary jury is whether he would hire any of the judges on it for a *comité de lecture*, and that the answer is usually no. He says that none of the juries he has known would have given a prize to Beckett or Simon or Sarraute, and that as far as Duras goes he agrees with the Goncourt judge who told reporters, "We did not give the Goncourt to Duras, we gave *La Duras* to the Goncourt." In the end, of course, Duras was just as susceptible as anybody to the Goncourt. She started publishing things like her conversations with Mitterrand, and making pronouncements on whatever was going on in France. When a young working-class woman in the Vosges—her name was Christine Villemin—was arrested for the murder of her little boy, Duras decided that it was a cry of feminism, and called it *"forcément sublime."*

MICHEL CHODKIEWICZ runs Éditions du Seuil, and he publishes Tahar ben Jelloun, whose book "La Nuit Sacrée" won this year's Goncourt. But he takes a long, mild view of literary celebrity. He began at Seuil as a specialist in textbooks, fathered a family of eight, and converted to Islam—which is another way of saying that, while M. Chodkiewicz controls a sizable piece of French publishing, he does not much frequent what the French call high literary circles. *"Je sors peu,"* M. Chodkiewicz says. When people talk about a Galligrasseuil monopoly, M. Chodkiewicz points out that Seuil has won the Goncourt only four times since he arrived there, in 1955—once for the unfortunate M. Decoin, who occasioned the pie-throwing and the ketchup-pouring, once for M. Schwarz-Bart, who never wrote again, and once for a writer named Patrick Grainville, who made a truly *mauvais Goncourt*. Tahar ben Jelloun has made *un gros Goncourt*, and M. Chodkiewicz is naturally pleased about that, not only because "La Nuit Sacrée" has already sold three hundred and fifty thousand copies and is still selling thousands of copies every day but also because Tahar ben Jelloun is a Moroccan who lives in Paris and writes in French, and Chodkiewicz believes that some of the most interesting new French writing comes from people like him—educated Francophone writers out of France's old colonies. Most publishers here are interested in what the French call Francophonie. They are hoping that writers like ben Jelloun will "reanimate" French fiction, the way they believe that Anglophone writers like V. S. Naipaul and Salman Rushdie have reanimated English fiction, restoring some life and risk and invention to its very tired conventions. This is a xenophobic country, and it may also be "reanimating" that North Africa is represented here—even for a while—by an attractive intellectual like ben Jelloun, a writer and journalist with flawless French and a doctorate in psychology from the École des Hautes Études, instead of by the illiterate migrant workers of Jean-Marie Le Pen's "France for the French" propaganda. Chodkiewicz thinks so, and so, apparently, does ben Jelloun. Ben Jelloun has always written in French. He told a reporter from the New York *Times* that Arabic was his wife and French his mistress.



Chodkiewicz has been publishing ben Jelloun for more than ten years. He began with the monograph "La Plus Haute des Solitudes," which was a study of the sexual loneliness of Arab men living without women in Paris, and which—more than anything ben Jelloun wrote before "La Nuit Sacrée"—gave him his reputation. "La Nuit Sacrée" is the sequel to a novel called "The Sand Child," about a Moroccan girl raised as a boy by a father shamed by a lifetime of daughters, and, depending on your point of view, it is either an authentic arabesque—weaving in and out of time and place, dreaming and waking, like the tale of an old storyteller in a Moroccan market—or a clever piece of *Parisianisme*, about as authentically exotic as M. ben Jelloun's psychology thesis. Chodkiewicz likes "La Nuit Sacrée," though he does not think merit necessarily had much to do with making it *un gros Goncourt*. He says that the great success of "La Nuit Sacrée" had to do with the fact that ben Jelloun is *sympathique* and looks romantic—that he photographs well, with his tweed jacket and open shirt and his graying beard and dark-brown eyes—as much as it did with ben Jelloun's reputation or his talent. It had to do, too, with racial politics in France, which are very emotional right now. Chodkiewicz says he understands this. "My own readings are never pure," he says. "When I judge a book, I think of friendship or affection or sales as much as I think of 'literature.' I can't help it. Well, juries are the same. This business of sales—the price of the prize—is ideally no concern of a jury, but these judges are not robots. For a lot of them—a lot of the Goncourt people are old and write very little now—the moment when they give the Goncourt is their big moment. And their reasons are just like everybody else's. Professional liaisons. Sexual liaisons. Politics. Ben Jelloun wins the Goncourt, and it is just and unjust at the same time."

Tahar ben Jelloun was at Lipp, on Saint-Germain, when his Goncourt was announced. He was eating lunch with a novelist named René-Jean Clot (who was on the short list with him and won the Renaudot five minutes later), and he says that one of the ways that his life has changed since then is that now he always gets a good table at Brasserie Lipp—right away. A table at Lipp is a symbol. It means you are someone important in Paris cultural life and must be seen properly.

The critic who reviewed "La Nuit Sacrée" for *Le Monde* talked a lot about symbols. He said that the sexual ambiguity in the novel—a girl raised as a boy becomes a girl again when her father dies, on the twenty-seventh night of Ramadan, and is pursued through odd, erotic wanderings by jealous sisters who mutilate her with the razor blade of a ritual circumcision—was a symbol of Tahar ben Jelloun's ambiguous identity as a Moroccan, drawn to his own people and their past, and at the same time as a Parisian intellectual, writing in the language of the people who colonized him. Ben Jelloun agrees sometimes, and sometimes he says that he was just telling a story—the only symbol he is sure of is the table waiting for him on the Boulevard Saint-Germain. He is forty-three, and he has lived here for seventeen years—ever since he quit a job teaching philosophy at the Lycée Muhammad V in Casablanca and flew to Paris on something called a New Life fellowship, which gave him five hundred francs a month and a chance for student housing at the Cité Universitaire—and he has worked hard and taken the right steps and made the appropriate gestures to keep himself on the *chemin de la gloire* that his rival Angelo Rinaldi talks about. Being Moroccan—especially being Moroccan—he has had to work harder, and perhaps with more delicacy and attention, than a Parisian like my friend Olivier, who can play at Paris literary life and concentrate on the things that really absorb him, like animal hip replacements or the discovery that you can alter the mink maturation cycle with hormones administered in artificial daylight. In one of his introductions ben Jelloun told his readers, "It has taken me a long time to arrive at *you*."

Tahar ben Jelloun comes from a comfortable family. It is not a sophisticated family. His father sold cloth in Tangier, and saw to it that Tahar was educated and went to university, but his mother was never taught to read or write, and now, whenever Tahar writes a book—he has written thirteen—he goes home to Morocco and tells her the story. His first book was a book of poetry, and his first mentor was a Moroccan Jew by the name of Abraham Serfaty, who wrote for a review called *Souffles*, and who is now in prison for disagreeing with the King of Morocco about the country's long, vain war against the Polisario in what used to be the Spanish Sahara. His next mentor was Jean Genet—Genet wrote an article about ben Jelloun and they became friends—who introduced him to Edmonde Charles-Roux. It was Mme. Charles-Roux who backed him for the Prix Goncourt.

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YOUR CHOICE

Jean Genet, of course, was a provocateur, and in those days ben Jelloun was very political, like most young Moroccan intellectuals. Today, he stays out of politics. He calls himself a humanist. I would call him a smooth literary diplomat. He moves easily in and out of French and Arabic. He writes essays for *Le Monde*, and he has made a name for himself as a journalist—an expert on the Third World. But he is not angry. He says it would be pointless for him to, say, accept a dinner at the Élysée—Mitterrand called his Prix Goncourt an "homage to the universality of the French language," and promptly appointed him to an *Haut Conseil de la Francophonie*—and at the same time to refuse a dinner at the Royal Palace in Rabat. He does not think it would do anybody in Morocco much good for him to use his Goncourt to discuss the protocol of political protest or pursue the fact that France is a democracy and Morocco is not. A lot of his friends disagree. It may be that ben Jelloun has simply applied the art of Moroccan politics to literary politics. Nourissier once said that "it is not easy to give the Goncourt to poor people saying violent things," and ben Jelloun certainly knows that important French literary prizes do not go to revolutionaries, or to writers fighting for independence for Guadaloupe or Martinique, or even to Algerians who fought the French twenty-five years ago. He says if he were Jean Genet he would not visit anyone—the King of Morocco or the President of France, or even God.

Ben Jelloun lives in the Thirteenth Arrondissement, on a busy street in an old, mixed neighborhood off the Place d'Italie. It is a nice Paris neighborhood, settled and friendly, and everybody knows him. When I went there, it was twenty days after the Goncourt. Ben Jelloun had sold two hundred thousand copies of "La Nuit Sacrée" in those twenty days, and his wife—his wife is a young Berber named Aisha, and they have a baby daughter—was off to the Bon Marché to shop. Aisha looked like a school girl in her short skirt and fuzzy sweater. It was hard to connect her to the Berber bride, in white veils and heavy silver jewelry, with the pattern of a tribal *tatouage* painted on her small face, in the blown-up wedding picture on their living-room wall. Ben Jelloun said that, in a way, the North African workers living here have adopted him. They think that his great success belongs to *them*. He likes to tell the story of an old Moroccan he met on the No. 27 bus last September. The old man probably couldn't read, but he had bought "La Nuit Sacrée," and as soon as he recognized ben Jelloun he pulled his copy of the book out of a sack of groceries and said, "*Alors*, are we going to get the prize?" Now North Africans in Paris treat ben Jelloun like a soccer champion. He says that the excitement has been more "complicated" at home. It has been "exaggerated and contradictory and a little disturbing," because Moroccans are so proud that a Moroccan won the Prix Goncourt that they tend to forget the story he is telling—which is about the life of women in Morocco, and about the sexual and psychological violence against them. It is one of the legacies of fifty years of colonial rule that a French prize should mean so much to those Moroccans. They have what people call "the colonial mentality," and it lasts long after the soldiers and the settlers have gone. To ben Jelloun the important thing is that there are a hundred and fifty thousand students in Morocco and now those students are reading his novels and saying, "Why not me? I can do this, too." In Algeria, it is different. Morocco and Algeria have been at odds, if not at war, for as long as anyone in either country can remember, and ben Jelloun says that the only freedom Algerians have these days is the freedom to criticize Moroccans. The Algerians' story is that ben Jelloun has been rewarded for pander-

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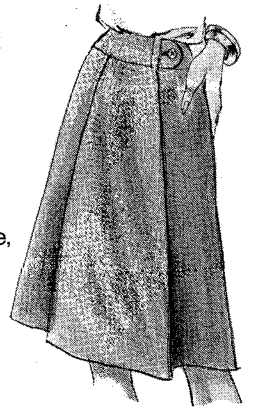

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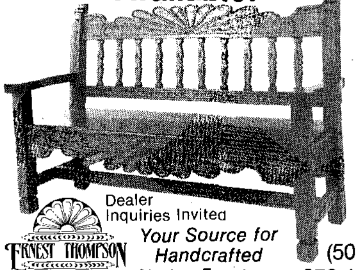

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ing to French culture and the French language and just about everything else "French" that creates confusions of identity in the North African world. Their own literature is bitterly, aggressively obsessed with questions of language and with that complicated longing for "Frenchness" which French colonials seem to have inherited. The fact is that thirty years ago the Pléiade history of French literature called Francophone writing "*les littératures françaises connexes et marginales*" and last year three of the best-selling novelists in France were foreigners who wrote in French: Tahar ben Jelloun; Amin Maalouf, who is Lebanese; and a woman named Kenizé Mourad, whose mother was a Turkish princess and whose father was Palestinian.

THE Goncourt countdown began in May, when the judges published their first list of selections. There were thirteen novels on the list. Only four of them stayed on the list through the second round of selections, in September. They were not expected to stay. The first Goncourt list is a time to balance favors due and favors rendered—it is something for friends who happen to have written novels that year, and for book reviewers who happen to have written novels, and for the judges' publishers. It is a settling of accounts, a chance to sell some books for the publishers everyone knows are going to lose the Goncourt, because they have nothing particularly *Goncourable* to show for themselves or because they have had what is considered their fair share of prizes over the last few seasons. In May, there were two critics on the list, three judges' friends, five Gallimard novels, and three Grasset novels. This was taken to mean that it was Seuil's year.

"La Nuit Sacrée" was not on the first list. In fact, "La Nuit Sacrée" was not published until September, which is the best month to be *Goncourable*—early enough to get everybody talking and late enough to keep them talking until November. But on May 25th *Livres Hebdo* (which is a kind of French *Publishers Weekly*) announced that the Prix Goncourt "should not escape" Tahar ben Jelloun, and that was when Edmonde Charles-Roux got busy. Mme. Charles-Roux is a shrewd and imperious character—a *personnage*. She got her own Goncourt in one of those gestures of solidarity the French make when they think that they have been insulted—Mme. Charles-Roux had just been fired from *Vogue* by her American publishers—and now she made Tahar ben Jelloun her project, the way Michel Tournier had made Marguerite Duras *his* project three years earlier. She talked about her "special affinity with Islam and the Mediterranean." She canvassed the Goncourt jury and rounded up a ben Jelloun faction. First, there was Françoise Mallet-Joris, who "belonged" to Flammarion but liked the book anyway. Then there was Jean Cayrol, who was a Seuil author, and Emmanuel Roblès, who was also a Seuil author—and who was born in Oran and spent fifty years of his life in North Africa. Finally, there was André Stil, who, like Edmonde Charles-Roux, belonged to Grasset but who, as a Communist, was much involved with immigrant causes. It was a "difficult Goncourt," Mme. Charles-Roux says, because of these questions of affinity. It was difficult because Bernard Pivot was going to open his new "Apostrophes" season with a program on Francophonie—and then cancelled the program when it turned out that all the authors he wanted to invite belonged to Seuil. It was difficult because some of the other judges wanted to give the prize to Rinaldi, and the rest wanted to give it to a book called "Eve," by Guy Hocquenghem.

"La Nuit Sacrée" was on the second Goncourt list, along with eighteen other books. The third list was down to ten books, and the last to five. Then Rinaldi wrote his column. He quoted a passage "*à l'orientale*" from "La Nuit Sacrée" which was all about moons and stars, and he said that letting a poet like ben Jelloun write novels was like letting a priest from Notre-Dame address a labor-union convention. That sentence cost Rinaldi one of the two votes he knew he had, and it probably won the prize for ben Jelloun. The night before the Goncourt, François Nourissier went on the radio to say how scandalized he was. He said that if ben Jelloun won the Goncourt now it would be because of "the Le Pen effect," and that if ben Jelloun lost it would be because of the Le Pen effect, too. Nourissier was not going to vote for ben Jelloun. He has a "northern affinity." It was known that Hervé Bazin, the president of the jury, didn't want him, either, and that Robert Sabatier, who was once the literary director of Albin Michel, wanted to see the Goncourt go to Guy Hocquenghem, who had published with him. Ben Jelloun needed one vote, and that left Tournier and Daniel Boulanger, who was considered a Frenchman's Frenchman as far as literature was concerned—and, in any case, was not known for having a Mediterranean affinity. Tournier had said once that he was voting for Hocquenghem, but a few days before the judges met he called a friend who, in turn, called Chodkiewicz with the news that Michel Tournier was voting for ben Jelloun. Tournier is a trickster, like many of his best characters. He likes to play. When the judges met, on the sixteenth of November—it was apparently not a pleasant meeting—it was Daniel Boulanger who changed his mind and voted for "La Nuit Sacrée," giving the Goncourt to Tahar ben Jelloun. A month later, a woman from Aix filed suit for damages against ben Jelloun because of what she claimed were similarities between the people in his novel and in a screenplay she had written and was trying to sell to the movies. When ben Jelloun said that there was no monopoly on literary themes, her lawyer called it a case of "*un petit scénario de province*" against "*un gros Goncourt parisien.*"

Jean-Claude Fasquelle, who runs Grasset, is a quiet man, who likes watching things. He watches and waits, and listens to what everyone else has to say—in a city that is easily the most compulsively talkative place on earth—and then he says something smart and simple. He has what he calls "a vague idea" about the Prix Goncourt. It has to do with those moments or events that every society seems to need periodically—moments that bring the people in it together and give them a common language and a common enthusiasm and a common focus. He has heard that the World Series is like that. And Ascot. And soccer in Brazil. But the curious thing about the French, he says, is that the French make *everything* into one of those moments. Book prizes. Film festivals. The Tour de France. The yearly village *fête*. The French crave community. M. Fasquelle does not know why, but there it is—each Goncourt is a kind of renewal, and people buy books. —JANE KRAMER

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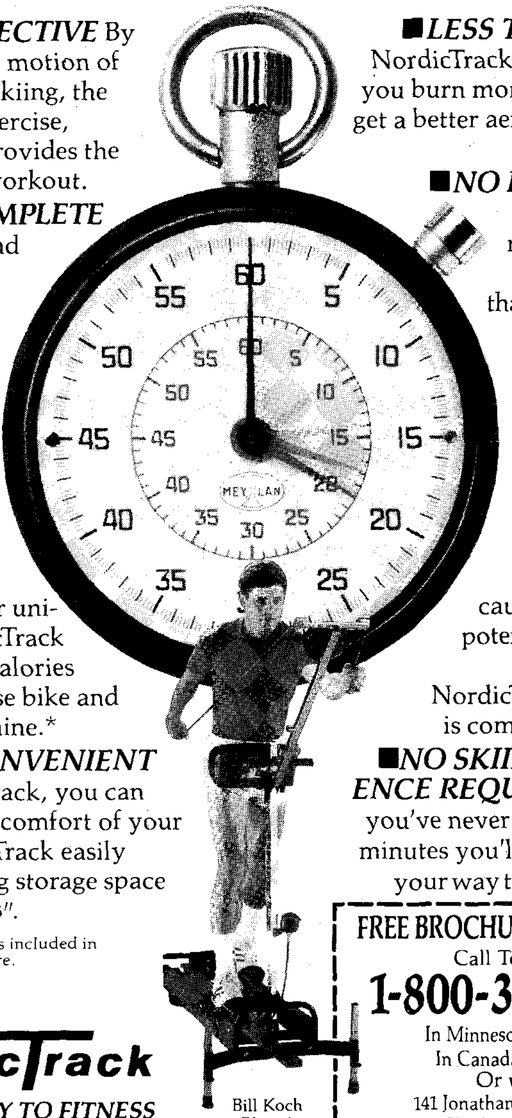

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THE THEATRE

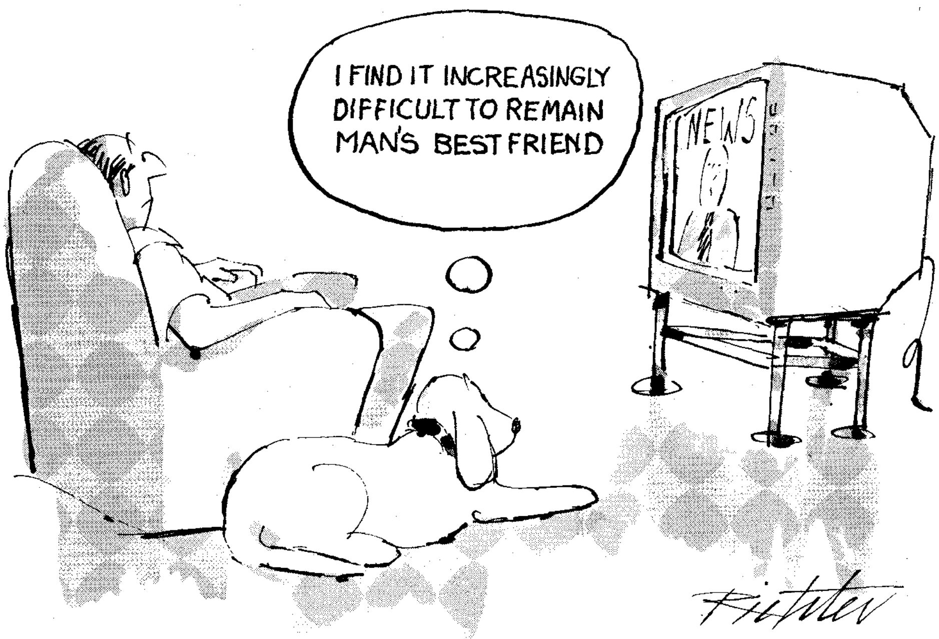
Comedy Tonight

HEREWITH a pair of reports on a pair of shows that have been running for some weeks. Tom Griffin's "The Boys Next Door," at the Lambs, is a modest comedy about three retarded men and a schizophrenic who, under professional supervision, share an apartment. (A play to be avoided at any cost, I thought, sure to be laden with depressing, social-workery uplift. I was wrong.) Tom Griffin has written a play with sympathy, to be sure, but with a lot of humor, too; the men do not see themselves as victims, so there is no reason for us to condescend to them or to coat them with pity. They are, for the most part, cheerful and funny. At the beginning, they introduce themselves: Arnold (Joe Grifasi) has just returned from a supermarket, where he has been conned into buying boxes and boxes of Wheaties and many heads of lettuce; Lucien (William Jay) has just obtained a library card, which he smells appreciatively; fat Norman (Josh Mostel) has been eating far too many doughnuts at the doughnut shop where he works; and Barry (Joe Urla) is not doing very well as a golf instructor. Jack, the supervisor (Dennis Boutsikaris), starts to put things in order. In the course of the action, several stories are told. Norman falls in love with Sheila (Christine Estabrook), a retarded woman. At a gathering, he summons up the nerve to ask her to dance with him, and later he invites her for a visit—two lovely scenes. Lucien must testify before a committee of state senators and, after considerable struggle with his speech, does so. The father of Barry, the schizophrenic, comes to visit him, after many years, with terrible results. Jack, whose feelings for his charges—love and exasperation and frustration—are getting to him, becoming more than he can handle, realizes that he must quit the job. These stories are well told—everything to scale—and all the scenes register, and the characters are drawn with understanding and clarity.

Nothing but praise for the performance, under the direction of Josephine R. Abady, and the casting, which is impeccable. The names of the actors constitute an honor roll, and together the actors become—something rare in the theatre here—a true company. The appropriate settings were designed by David Potts and lighted by Michael Chybowski; the appropriate costumes were designed by C. L. Hundley.

"THE NO-FRILLS REVUE," at the Cherry Lane, is a perky little show, conceived and directed by Martin Charnin, and with contributions—music, lyrics, dialogue—by a number of other hands besides. The show, as unpretentious as its title implies, offers no elaborate costumes—the members of the company wear simple, becoming clothes (by Perry Ellis), mostly gray skirts and dark tops on the women, pants and T-shirts on the men—and no elaborate makeup, and there is no distorting amplification. The scenery (by Evelyn Sakash) is minimal, a matter mostly of a few shrewdly dispersed props. There are, however, quite a few good songs and jokes, which are given their due by the young, refreshing members of the company, none of whose names are familiar to me. The comic high points of the show are a sketch (by Ronny Graham and Mr. Charnin) in which popular composers are assigned unlikely musicals—smiley "Annie" goes to turbulent Stephen Sondheim, for example—and a sketch (by our distinguished alumnus Thomas Meehan) in which hip Ms. Abbott meets prim Miss Costello aboard a plane and they discuss the program of Ms. Abbott's forthcoming rock concert (the Who's on first, of course). Throughout, spirits are soaring and laughter prevails. The lively orchestrations and choreography were by Steven M. Alper and Frank Ventura.

—EDITH OLIVER


I FIND IT INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT TO REMAIN MAN'S BEST FRIEND
NEWS
Richter

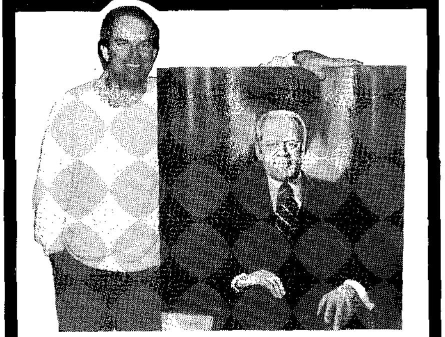
Young Marrieds

"LOOSE ENDS," currently being revived at the Second Stage, is a self-indulgent play by Michael Weller about privileged, vacuous, self-absorbed people trying to figure out what to do with their lives and with each other. Paul (Terry Kinney) and Susan (Jane Kaczmarek) meet briefly on a beach in Bali in 1970, have sex, and think about travelling around together. (They decide not to.) Over the next nine years, they meet again, wonder about whether or not to shack up together, shack up, marry, and divorce. During that time, we watch them sit around with various friends and relatives, drinking beer, smoking or not smoking, opening numerous bottles of champagne, and talking about how much they confuse and resent each other. In 1979, Paul, now divorced from Susan, drops in on her unexpectedly. After a bout of sex and a nostalgic session of slide-viewing, Susan leaves to keep a date with another man. The lights go down on Paul, alone in the dark, clicking through a carrousel of images from the past.

"Loose Ends," directed by Irene Lewis, is the second of Mr. Weller's plays to be revived by the Second Stage this season. In December, New York audiences had a chance to see "Moonchildren," his bittersweet comedy about a group of college students in the sixties trying to figure out what to do with their lives and with each other. The two productions are part of the Second Stage's new Artist in Perspective series, in which the theatre plans to devote a whole season to the work of a single playwright. I can't help wondering why the Second Stage, whose worthy mission has always been to offer a second life to plays that failed their first time around, should suddenly take to reviving plays regardless of their stage history—both "Moonchildren" and "Loose Ends" enjoyed long and successful runs—and why Mr. Weller should be the first beneficiary of its new program. There was some justification for reviving "Moonchildren." It's a good play, for one thing, and was truly interesting to see from an eighties perspective—partly because of the elements of sixties sensibilities which pervade it but more because of the way the play itself transcends those sensibilities, testing them and calling them into question. "Loose Ends" does not transcend its seventies sensibilities; it is mired in them. As a portrait of contemporary heterosexual relations, it is utterly humorless. The central figures are interested in nothing outside themselves—their own quest for happiness and spiritual fulfillment. Indeed, some of the play's most dramatic speeches and set pieces approach self-parody—and if Bill Murray and Laraine Newman were delivering Paul's and Susan's lines, instead of Mr. Kinney and Miss Kaczmarek, we'd all be rolling in the aisles. Mr. Kinney, whose energetic performance in Lyle Kessler's "Orphans" won critical praise a couple of seasons ago, is calmer here. In "Orphans," he spent a good deal of time screaming and hitting himself. In "Loose Ends," he hits himself only once, throws only one piece of furniture, and, mercifully, keeps the shouting to a minimum. Only occasionally does he seem about to lurch into one of his limp psychotic rages. Miss Kaczmarek, meanwhile, does nothing for the part of Susan. Kevin Rupnik's set consists mostly of Bauhaus chairs and a system of ugly gray panelling through which we sometimes catch glimpses of a Balinese moon, a park-bench scene, or an unfurnished apartment. The disjointed, metonymic images with which it establishes a setting are vaguely reminiscent of snapshots or transparencies—like the arty photographs that Susan manages to sell to galleries or the slides that Paul is sifting through at the end of the play. Mr. Rupnik may have been trying to pick up on the photography motif; but the design is somewhat too cerebral in its cleverness—the exterior scenes fail to create a sense of place, while the interior ones have the feel of a doctor's waiting room. The only bright spots of the evening are provided by the supporting players: Park Overall, who does her funny, tough-talking bit as the perpetually pregnant Maraya; Alexandra Gersten as Susan's ashram-hopping friend Janice; Bill Kux as Janice's complacent guru; and Paul Guilfoyle as Paul's brother, Ben.

A MORE interesting portrait of contemporary marriage is to be found in "Cave Life," a new play by David Steven Rappoport, which opened last week at the Circle Rep. The heroine, Charleston Silvers (Robin Bartlett), is haunted by a caveman called Enki (Bruce McCarty), whom no one else can see. A man of simple wants and few words, Enki lives with Charly, talks to her, helps her with the laundry and with decisions, and lusts after her with an inarticulate eloquence that she finds irresistible. Charly's hallucination, however, is more than an expression of her dissatisfaction with her marriage to Frank (Mark Blum). Charly is crazy; in fact, she has always been unbalanced, a circumstance that seems not to have worried her until comparatively recently. Now that she is pregnant, though, her fear is that she will prove unfit to care for the baby, which she wants very much to have.

A poetic depiction of contemporary malaise, "Cave Life" is a play about what one character—Frank's European mistress (Randy Danson)—calls "the geography of good intentions," and, expertly directed by Paul Lazarus, it is poignant, amusing, and very good theatre. As the principals in the metaphysical ménage à trois, Miss Bartlett, Mr. Blum, and Mr. McCarty give complex and funny performances. There is an excellent supporting cast, led by Jo Henderson, who has a wonderfully daft ordinariness as Charly's dangerously lunatic mother, and Jeffrey Kearney, who doubles as Frank's brain-damaged son and an unusually appealing religious fanatic. The pro-



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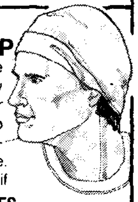

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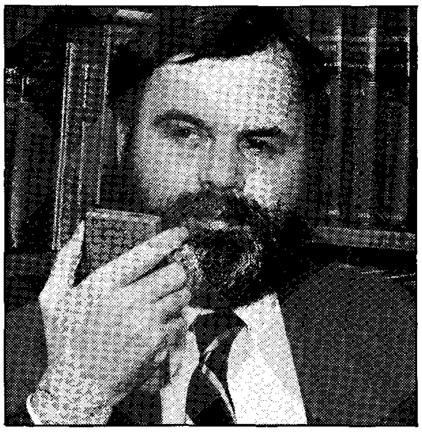

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duction is full of aural and visual cleverness: the way the music (a Fred Astaire song someone is dancing to, a Talking Heads song played between scenes) comments on the action of the play; the way venetian blinds—masking a scene change or in a psychiatric clinic or in an illicit trysting place—link the themes of theatre, madness, and amoral behavior; the way the creviced boulder at the back of William Barclay's set could be a reference to the play's title or to the rock you pass on Central Park West walking south from the Museum of Natural History. Cleverest is the use that Mr. Rappoport makes of his heroine's hallucination. Another playwright might have offered the caveman fantasy as a metaphor for a *sane* woman's dissatisfaction with her life and marriage. By making Enki a figment of Charly's mental instability, he transforms madness itself into a metaphor for the sane man or woman's way of dealing with disappointment.

Which is, of course, what "Loose Ends" is all about; in a sense, Mr. Rappoport's "Cave Life" is a superior version of "Loose Ends." Both plays are about unhappy marriages; both are intent on probing the gap between expectation—what one thought one would get out of life—and an unsatisfying reality. Even the personal issues raised in the two plays—whether one should be unfaithful, whether one should have the baby—are the same. The unhappy marriage in Mr. Weller's play is a theatrical dead end: it goes nowhere, and has nothing to say about the phenomenon it portrays except that it exists. The particular truths that "Cave Life" arrives at—that a neurotic's symptoms are the dearest thing in the world to him, that "crazy people are more self-centered than they are crazy," that people who live with an albatross generally like it—are not unfamiliar, but the play is theatrical and lively-minded in a way that "Loose Ends" is not. "Loose Ends" has no real reason to be a play. As theatre, it is wildly uneconomical: it requires eleven actors (three of whom appear in only one scene), and takes us to Boston, Manhattan, upstate New York, New Hampshire, and as far as the Indian Ocean to make a point that could be articulated in a single sentence. "Cave Life" is theatrical in a formal sense: in the way it uses its central image—the hallucination—to suggest more about its subject than could be expressed only with words.

—Mimi Kramer

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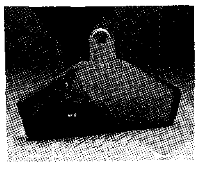

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DANCING

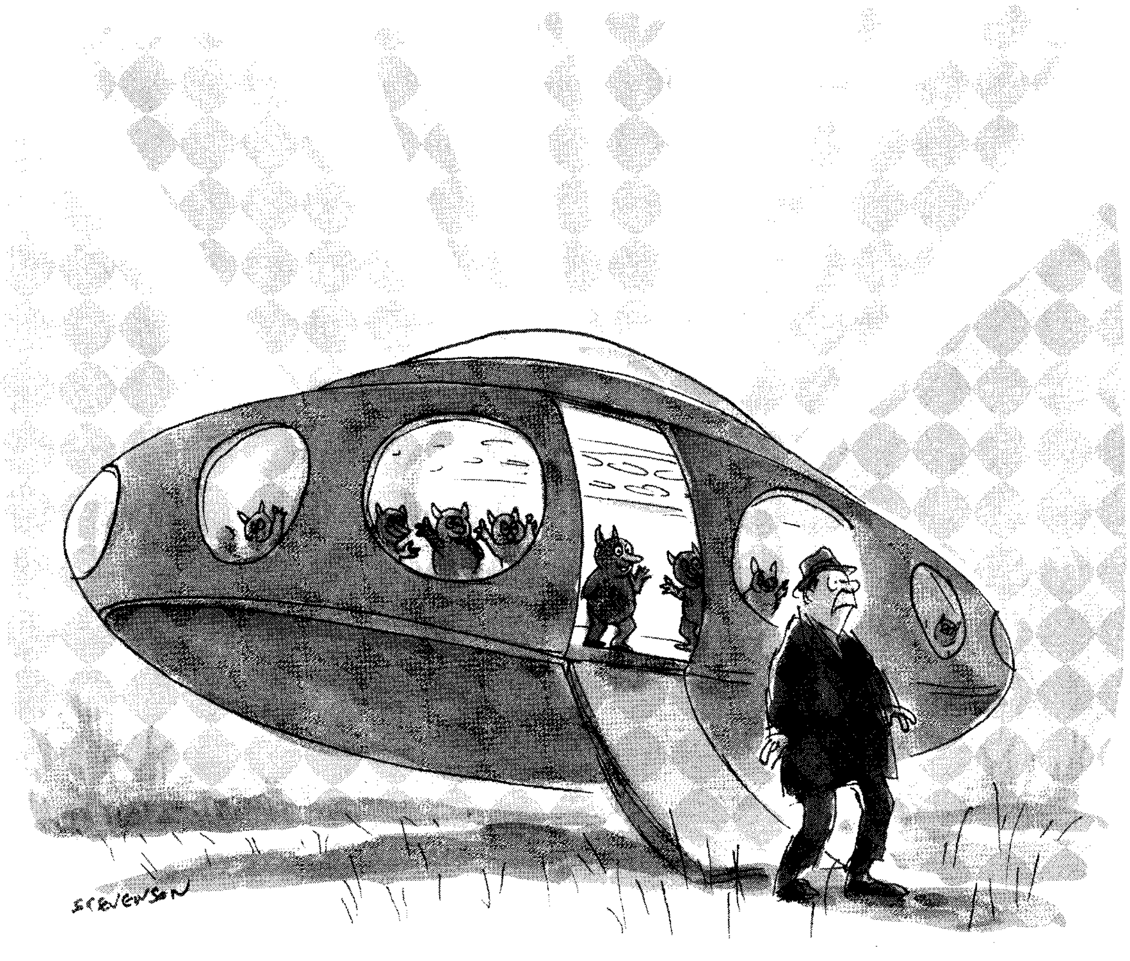
Sad Songs, Glad Waltzes

New York City Ballet's only première of the winter season is of a new work by Jerome Robbins. Set to songs by Charles Ives that evoke American places and pastimes, modestly composed to the scale of the music yet utilizing a cast of forty-one, the ballet is at once panoramic and intimate, discursive and monotonous, starkly emotional and spiritually cramped. It would make a good television show; pending a few adjustments here and there, it already is one. Robbins employs a kind of camera-conscious pictorial technique: faces as well as bodies are active, the scene shifts with every song, and the shifts are dovetailed so as to suggest narrative continuity—the flow of life in one American community in the teens of the century. There is no scenery (David Mitchell's backcloth, mottled brown and blue, is almost an exact replica of the one he provided for “In Memory of . . .”), and the stage of the State Theatre seems abnormally dark and vast. But one's eye readily fills in the “Dance in America” setting, cutting away to far hills with church steeples, to barnyards and railroad tracks. The forty-one dancers are used sparingly; there is populousness but no mass. Engaging little girls in hair bows and boys in ice-cream pants are all over the place, while taller boys and girls play elders.

Ives' nostalgia is for an America we don't recognize until he recalls it to us; Robbins is nostalgic for a dream America as familiar in its contents as in its packaging. Nevertheless, “Ives, Songs” seems to me the most successful of the dark, commemorative ballets he has been turning out lately. It is less ambitiously a pièce d'occasion than “In Memory of . . .” and less sentimental than “Quiet City.” It catches the jagged, disconsolate mood of the songs; in fact, it gives in to this mood so completely that after a while you come to believe, if not in the ballet, in the emotional distress that lies at the bottom of it. Robbins' deep feelings haven't often moved me—he always has seemed to have one eye on the effect he's producing—and they don't move me here; but I believe that the feelings he is expressing in “Ives, Songs” are real to *him*. A certain exhaustion and soreness of heart comes through the faded rhetoric.

Unfortunately, a certain windiness does, too. Robbins is said to have choreographed thirty songs, choosing a mere eighteen for the ballet. Some of the windiness is Ives' fault (a genius of the prosaic, he could at times sound like a sour Stephen Foster), some of it inheres in the format of the ballet, and some of it is Robbins' own doing.

“Ives, Songs” is a danced song recital. The trouble with this sort of piece is that the dancing must transcend the singing—must prove conclusively that sung songs are not enough, we must have danced ones, too. From Tudor's “Dark Elegies,” in 1937, to Peter Martins' “Songs of the Auvergne,” in 1986, the song-recital format has been a thing of strain and excess, and “Ives, Songs” doesn't break the pattern. (Balanchine's one try at the genre, “Liebeslieder Walzer,” used songs that were dances to begin with, and so escaped the trap of excrescence.) Musically speaking, the ballet fails in its expressive aims. The Ives concert, played by the pianist Gordon Boelzner and sung by the baritone Timothy Nolen, is arranged to approximate something that Ives didn't write—a song cycle about life and love and death. The emotional coloring moves from *rose* to *noir*, as in Robbins' ballet “Dances at a Gathering,” but musically the concert is shapeless. Dramatically, too, there is little progression. In the first half, Nolen flattens the ironies in the music into insincerities (he sings the “hoorays” in “He Is

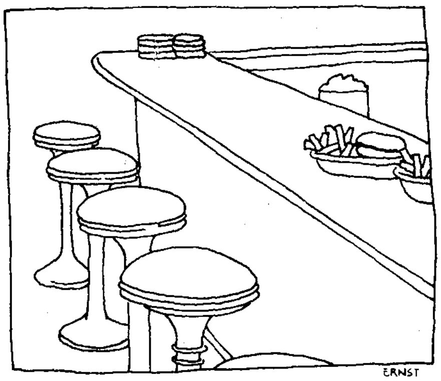


“Goodbye, Mr. Loeffler. And if you decide to write about this, both the ‘Star’ and the ‘National Enquirer’ are good possibilities.”

There!” hollowly, as if the boys marching off to war were dumb not to know they were going to die), and his tone doesn’t darken as the piece goes on—it just becomes more oppressive. Robbins could have alleviated the monotony of the second half simply by having some of the songs sung by a voice or voices other than Nolen’s, but his staging includes the figure of a solitary wanderer or observer—an Ives figure—whom I think we are meant to identify with the voice of Nolen. It would be in keeping with the structure of the ballet for this Ives figure, walked (rather than danced) by Laurence Matthews, to be eliminated and his place taken by the singer, who is his “voice.” And in a television version, I imagine, this could happen. At the State Theatre, for audibility’s sake, the songs have to be sung from the piano platform at the left of the stage. But rather than compromise his structure or yield to distasteful options (the songs on tape, the piano orchestrated), Robbins tolerates the extraneous presence, and the cliché, of the wandering observer.

Tactical problems of this sort beset the choreographer of lieder; solutions don’t change the fact that songs sung while dances are danced mix two worlds of expression. Robbins makes the mixture smooth enough, for the most part, taking his cues from the words, so I was puzzled when Ives’ setting of “Shall We Gather at the River” was sung while six couples performed strenuous pas de deux that could have been part of any other Robbins ballet. More pas de deux continued through another hymn, John Greenleaf Whittier’s “Serenity” (“Take from our souls the strain and stress, and let our ordered lives confess the beauty of thy peace”), and then still more. As the ballet turns from sunlight to shadow, it also sinks into opacity. Robbins may have been depending on his dancers, particularly Maria Calegari and Stephanie Saland, to make his meanings clear, but on opening night Calegari was indisposed. Hélène Alexopoulos took her place. In the next performance, Saland danced the Calegari role, while Simone Schumacher filled in for Saland. These are all dancers of sensitivity and refinement; they were unable to explicate what may be inexplicable. But it hardly mattered. By the eleventh or twelfth song, the ballet about Ives places and Ives people seemed to have etherealized, leaving nothing behind but the raw lump of anguish which had inspired it.

“Vienna Waltzes,” for all the wealth and glitter of its setting, is a ballet that brings the spectator very close to the stage. In the final scene, the stage is backed by giant mirrors that reflect the footlights and, beyond them, the audience. Thus enclosed by spectators, the dancers perform the first waltz sequence from “Der Rosenkavalier.” The production of “Vienna Waltzes,” in 1977, was the climax of Balanchine’s career at the State Theatre, and the sense of the breathless occasion that the ballet was then returned last month when Suzanne Farrell, the star of the “Rosenkavalier” sequence, made her first appearance in the role following an eighteen-month absence from the stage. In that time, she had undergone surgery for the hip injury that had crippled her—an injury so severe that it was thought she would never dance again. This winter, she danced five performances with an artificial-hip implant—the first ballerina to accomplish such a thing. Making medical history as well as dance history, Farrell was taking a great risk, but then risk-taking has been the hallmark of her style. Since her discovery by Balanchine in the mid-sixties, standards of virtuosity have risen to ever-higher levels of precision, and this is largely because Farrell has been willing to take chances—to go off balance, to dare the extra pirouette, to perform spectacular steps not as isolated feats an audience would applaud but as part of the fabric of choreography. At the time, she seemed an insular phenomenon; she even seemed a little perverse. Now, at New York City Ballet (and elsewhere), the Farrell canon—“Diamonds,” “Chaconne,” “Mozartiana,” among other ballets—is considered the acme of ballerina style. The choreography is the liveliest of challenges to the ballerina aspirant and is likely to remain so for several generations.



The artificial hip joint is not made that can perform a Farrell arabesque, a Farrell développé or grand rond de jambe en l’air. Among her earliest contributions to technique were her enlargement of the scale on which big movements are done and her telescoping of the speed of change from big to small movements. In the extremes of its range, her technique was hair-raising; it seems safe to say we shall never see anything like it again. The “Rosenkavalier” role is not one of those in which the extremes are sensationally depicted. When Farrell, after a five-year hiatus, returned to Balanchine, in 1974, the ballets he composed for her bravura style featured long dance passages in which she really didn’t seem to be doing much—in which she was *all* style. The opening solo in “Tzigane” was one example of this radical, stripped-down Farrell; the finale of “Chaconne” was another. “Der Rosenkavalier” is reminiscent of “Tzigane” in that it seems a self-involved fantasy, with no technique to speak of—just Farrell alone with herself (and the mirror). That’s dancing enough, Balanchine seems to be saying; she doesn’t have to hit the ceiling with a battement. And so this season when Farrell stepped out from the downstage-right wing (the wing from which Balanchine was accustomed to watch performances) and advanced to center, and when she knelt, curtsied to her imaginary partner, and began to dance, really to dance, one couldn’t shake off one’s wonder at whatever operative necessity had caused Balanchine in 1977 to compose for Farrell an entire canonical role in which none of the canonical specialties were on view. Balanchine, of course, always liked to see how far Farrell could go with how little support—from him, from partners, from custom or habit. Whatever his instinct may have been, on this night it felt like prescience—the choreographer’s final legacy to the dancer who had so enriched his last quarter-century. The “Rosenkavalier” role is a portrait of Farrell in her maturity; it is, if you like, a character role, but a “white” character role that contains and purifies the colors of her boldest characterizations—the rash young-blood gypsy of “Brahms-Schoenberg Quartet,” the stupendous, all-conquering Tzigane. When she shades her eyes with her forearm or bends backward in a trance over Adam Lüders' arm, when she sketches the steps of some half-remembered czardas, the sentiment of it hits us like a valediction: this is farewell.

Farrell danced this performance of "Vienna Waltzes" and four others with full control of the dynamics of scale and impetus. It was not in every particular the same performance she used to give—it was lighter and gayer in tone, and maybe a little more consciously dramatic—but it was an unadulterated Farrell performance, with enough of the old touchstones in place to hold us awestruck: the languishing in her partner's arms, the contrapposto ripple through the body when she sweeps a leg up in battement croisé, the swiftness of the attack in the violin cadenza (akin to sforzando in music), the sudden quiet melt to the floor as the big melody is about to enter and her partner comes to claim her, and, finally and unforgettably, the back-bent exit into the wings "on fire," as the lights blaze and the stage is filled with waltzing couples. I was happy to see again my favorite "nothing" moment—when, waltzing and turning face to face with her partner, she several times offers him her hand and then withdraws it so that she may on each turn switch her train from hand to hand behind her back. The switching of the train becomes the motif we are meant to enjoy here, not the turning, or even the offering of the hand. The emphasis, so oddly sensual, is pure Farrell and pure truth in dancing. Farrell's wit, which is so closely allied to her musical sense, gives her little bons mots like this. And it gives her the freedom to include a moment I don't recall ever seeing before. Her partner comes in for the first time, dances her through that first brief passage of introspection; then, after he has left her alone, she comes far downstage and gazes out over the audience. This, I think, is an extension of what we used to see: Farrell looking into the mirror of the audience. These performances of "Vienna Waltzes" were special occasions, on which the dancer and her public came together as never before. We were celebrating her return, and she was acknowledging that. The family-party atmosphere was real every time; it did not degenerate into hard-ticket New York ritual.

The physical misfortune that has overtaken Farrell's career is one we shall never cease to regret, for it cannot be certain that she will dance another role, and no other Balanchine role seems possible. (Unlike "Vienna Waltzes," the others are all on point or involve jumping.) And, at forty-two, Farrell is still very strong. It was her physical strength that allowed her extremes to be consistently in full play; we saw it in ballet after ballet. That must have been the strength that brought her through her recent ordeal. The week of her return to "Vienna Waltzes," Farrell's story was broadcast on the MacNeil-Lehrer NewsHour. A surgeon (not Farrell's doctor) explained how hip implants work and what can go wrong if extreme care is not taken. The details were appalling. She was seen on crutches before the operation, then in recuperation, taking class and working out with her therapist. Farrell had intended not to sign a release for this footage to be shown unless she actually made it back onto the stage. The reason, she said, was that she did not care to become the latest victim claimed by those who think that ballet destroys dancers. Her point, I believe, is not that she hasn't suffered destruction but that "ballet" is not the cause. Ballet is, after all, the creation of dancers, and it survives and progresses because of dancers, not because of inhuman regimes or dictatorial ballet masters. Balanchine gave classes in pointwork so that he could learn from his girls. Commenting on the ballerinas that his system produced, one of the most respected teachers at the School of American Ballet has said, "We didn't teach them; they taught us." And she named Allegra Kent, Suzanne Farrell, Patricia McBride, and Gelsey Kirkland. Technique spreads like an infection among the young. Creativity is not without violence. But institutionalized violence is not what ballet is about. Another teacher of renown, visiting New York recently, remarked that today's S.A.B. graduates were incomparably better trained than the dancers of a generation ago. Farrell danced on the largest scale from the smallest base seen up to that time. If she experienced even half the joy in doing it that we took in seeing her, then she must have been the happiest dancer on earth. But she was a pathfinder. Her early training wasn't adequate to the strains of her technique. Today, it is possible to train girls to absorb those stresses. This is Farrell's own legacy, lodged in the canonical roles. And it will be dislodged only when the next Farrell comes along.

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MUSICAL EVENTS

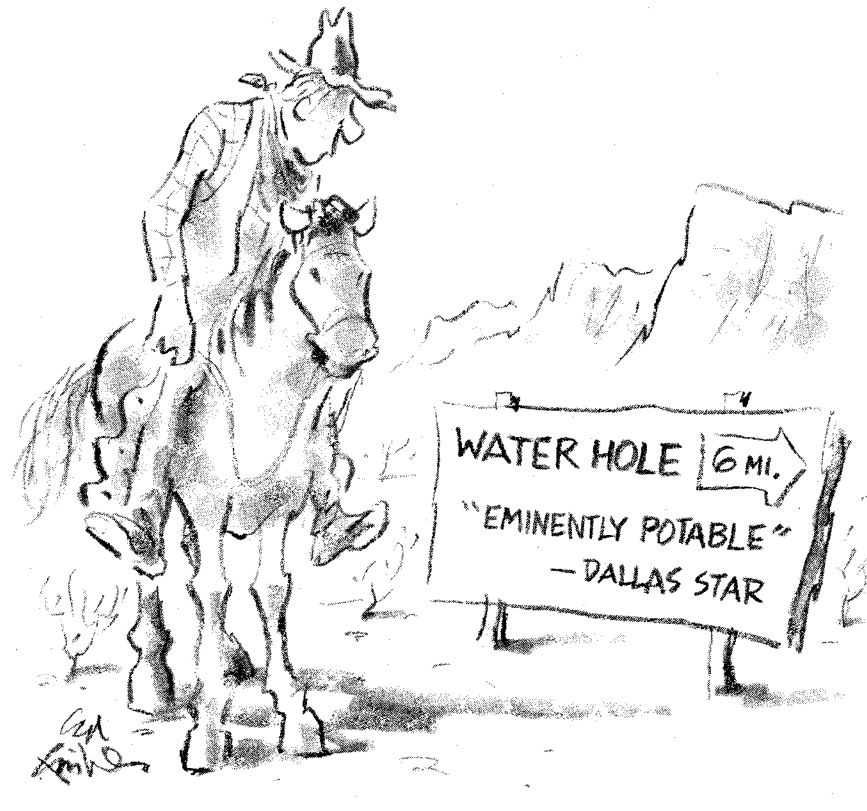
Great Musician, Enchanter, Friend

THE Ninety-second Street Y has embarked on what it calls The Schubertiade, 1988-1997: a ten-year plan to perform all Schubert's thousand or so compositions in more or less chronological order. (Otto Erich Deutsch's Schubert Thematic Catalogue, source of the D. numbers by which Schubert's works are identified, runs from D. 1 to D. 998.) Hermann Prey, who proposed this celebration to the Y, sang in several of the concerts, and before the first of them told us he hoped to be around still in 1997, to sing one of Schubert's late songs. This year's installment—eight concerts in thirteen days of January and February—brought performances of roughly the first hundred Schubert works that survive, omitting only some drafts, fragments, and exercises, and a song with string-trio accompaniment, D. 81. The programs—of orchestral music, chamber music, piano music, songs, choral music sacred and secular, and the unfinished opera "Der Spiegelritter"—covered the period from April-May, 1810 (when the G-major piano-duet fantasy, D. 1, was composed), to November, 1813 (which brought sets of dances for string quartet and for piano, D. 89-91): Schubert from the age of thirteen to the age of sixteen. He was eleven when he became an Imperial choirboy and entered the Kaiserlich-Königliches Stadtkonvikt, the Imperial-Royal City College. There was a school orchestra, which played daily and had Haydn, Mozart, and early Beethoven in its repertory; Schubert became the concertmaster and occasional conductor. There was chamber music, both instrumental and vocal, and songs at the piano. The memoirs of Schubert's school companions—especially those of Anton Holzapfel and Josef von Spaun—paint a lively picture of intense musical activity. Schubert—until his voice broke, in the summer of 1812—also had his church duties. Yet he did well at his other studies; the school reports survive. Then, there was composition: the Court organist, Wenzel Ruzicka, who taught at the school, is said to have remarked, "I can teach him nothing, he has learned it from God himself," and Schubert was set to more advanced study, with Salieri.

There were moments at the first Y concert, I confess, when I wished that the Schubertiade had decided on a traversal *motu recto et contrario*, so that late masterpieces would mingle with the early essays, in programs of greater substance. But soon the charm and interest of the student pieces cast their spell: and besides many pointers to the great works that so soon followed, there was the fascination of discovering "where Schubert came from." Despite our knowledge of his school years, despite the evidence of sketches and revisions, despite the careful large-scale planning of the big mature works, the notion lingers on of Schubert as an artless, unlettered composer. D'Indy considered him "the type of genius without culture." Parry called him "conspicuous among great composers for the insufficiency of his musical education." Shaw called him charming but brainless. Back in the eighteen-sixties, Spaun had sought to refute this:

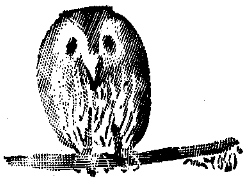
> His unprecedented, inexhaustible wealth of melody was a divine gift, and this cannot be acquired even through the greatest skill. . . . But anyone inclined to believe that Schubert was only an excellent natural composer . . . would be greatly mistaken. He possessed the most thorough musical knowledge and had studied the works of the great masters, both old and new, in the greatest detail. Bach and Handel he worked through thoroughly and held in very high esteem; all Gluck's operas he could play almost from memory; and there was probably not a note by Mozart, Beethoven, and Haydn that he did not know. With such knowledge, one is no mere natural composer.

Haydn and Mozart, we could hear, underlay the early orchestral pieces. Mozart was never far from the piano pieces. But Schubert's favored early medium of adventure was the string quartet. (He played viola in a family quartet, with his brothers on violins and his father on cello.) By November, 1813, he had composed—in whole or in part—a dozen string quartets. In some movements we find the first stirrings of the troubled Beethoven-Schubert relationship that continued through Schubert's life: one in which admiration, hero worship, an urge to emulation (not by copying but by finding personal, parallel paths), a touch of resentment, and even of disapproval, were strangely blended. Spaun quotes a remark that Schubert made probably in 1815 (since Spaun's delight in a group of Klopstock settings prompted it, and D. 280 and 285-291, of 1815, are Schubert's first Klopstock songs): "Do you really think something will come of me? . . . Secretly, in my heart of hearts, I still hope to be able to make something of myself, but who can do anything after Beethoven?" The next year, however, Schubert wrote in his diary—after he gathered with other Salieri pupils to honor the fiftieth anniversary of their master's



arrival in Vienna—to praise music that was "pure natural expression, free from all the eccentricity that seems to prevail among most composers today, and that is due almost wholly to one of our greatest German artists: the eccentricity that confuses and confounds the tragic with the comic, the agreeable with the repulsive, heroism with howlings, and hallowed things with Harlequin." That eccentric artist, it happens, had also been a Salieri pupil; Beethoven's Metastasio setting "No, non turbarti" survives in an autograph that Salieri corrected.

Songs form a surprisingly small part of Schubert's student œuvre; the stream began to flow strongly only in 1814. We know, from his friends' reminiscences, that at the Stadtkonvikt Schubert cherished the songs and ballads of the Stuttgart composer Johann Zumsteeg (1760-1802), Schiller's friend. A high point of this year's Schubertiade was two afternoon hours during which Will Crutchfield talked about and Debra Vanderlinde and William Sharp, with Mr. Crutchfield their pianist, sang songs by Zumsteeg and other precursors—J. F. Reichardt, Carl Friedrich Zelter, Bernhard Klein, and Wenzel Tomaschek—who left their mark on Schubert. Schubert's marvellous song styles—different from Haydn's, Mozart's, and Beethoven's—did not come from nowhere. They began in close imitation of, above all, Zumsteeg. In the opening Schubertiade program, Schubert's first song, "Hagars Klage," D. 5, was sung (none too well, for Kaaren Erickson's soprano was reluctant to rise cleanly above the staff). It is a long, many-movement scena. In the lecture-recital, Miss Vanderlinde (in a pure voice that flowered as it rose) sang the Zumsteeg setting of the same text, which was Schubert's avowed model, and also passages of the Schubert setting which demonstrated at once Schubert's dependence on and his transcendence of the exemplar. Mr. Sharp sang Zumsteeg's "Melancholikon," a song that surely sounded on in Schubert's mind when, in 1827, he composed "Der Wegweiser," in "Winterreise." Other revelations of the afternoon were Klein's "Erlkönig," chilling and thrilling in Mr. Sharp's performance, and Tomaschek's "Heidenröslein," sung by Miss Vanderlinde, which is even prettier than Schubert's "Heidenröslein" and which, as Mr. Crutchfield demonstrated, influenced his "Die Forelle." The three artists must be reëngaged for next year's Schubertiade: two communicative singers, and a scholar-musician-speaker who, unlike others who spoke during the long afternoon—a symposium on Schubert and song—is a good performer. The Schubertiade—years of potential delight stretching into New York's future—should be at once entertaining, inspiring, and instructive, and talk mingled with music can be a valuable part of it. It would be good if WNYC—and, nationally, NPR or APR—could broadcast the events, so that anyone unable to attend all of them could catch up. I missed a good deal, called away by the claims of contemporary music. I recall with joy the chromatic, Mozartian explorations of the C-minor piano fantasy D. 993 (renumbered 2e in the revised edition of Deutsch's catalogue), which Misha Dichter played at the opening concert; the poignant yet poised strains of "Eine Kleine Trauermusik," D. 79, for winds; and, above all, a buoyant performance, by the New York Chamber Symphony, conducted by Bruno Weil, of the First Symphony, D. 82—sounds that made it good to be alive.



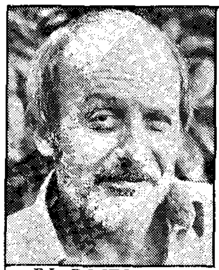
Sir George Grove said of Schubert: "In the whole range of composers it may be truly said that no one is now so dearly loved as he, no one has the happy power so completely of attracting both the admiration and the affection of his hearers. To each one he is not only a great musician, not only a great enchanter, but a dear personal friend." More next year.

IN George Szell's day, the Cleveland Orchestra was commonly considered America's finest. Its latest New York visit seemed to reëstablish it in that position. I missed the first of three concerts that it gave in Carnegie Hall this month: a standard program, conducted by Vladimir Ashkenazy, the Cleveland's principal guest conductor. The two other concerts were conducted by Christoph von Dohnányi, now in his fourth season as the Cleveland's music director. The programs were Manfred Trojahn's Variations for Orchestra (composed for the orchestra) and Bruckner's Seventh Symphony; and Mussorgsky's "Night on the Bare Mountain," Philip Glass's "The Light," and Schoenberg's "Pelleas und Melisande." Other new music—by Sofia Gubaidulina, in Weill Recital Hall—lured me from the Trojahn. Then—privileged music critic—I was permitted to pass through the secret door that connects Weill and Carnegie, to join an audience intent on the Bruckner. Mr. Dohnányi and his orchestra cast a spell of attention such as is rarely encountered in New York's concert halls. Beauty of sound, eloquence of individual phrasing, balance of long periods, and a sense of high purpose were united.

"Night on the Bare Mountain" was done in Mussorgsky's original version ("fiery and disorderly," he called it), not Rimsky-Korsakov's reworking. The Glass, subtitled "A Portrait in Music of the Scientists Albert A. Michelson and Edward W. Morley and Their Studies of the Velocity of Light Through Their Memorable Experiments Concluded at Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio, 1887," was composed last year for the orchestra to play during Cleveland's Michelson-Morley centenary celebrations. It is about twenty minutes of familiar formulas—but lusher, more "romantic," than Glass's earlier scores, with a succulent slow introduction. If "The Light," for all its busy patter, seems empty, Schoenberg's "Pelleas" seems overstuffed: relentlessly sequential, densely contrapuntal, overextended, overwrought, and hard to love. Yet Mr. Dohnányi and the Cleveland made a strong case for it. The sound, at least, was lovely. The textures were clarified. The reading was urgent without being naggingly insistent.

After the Ashkenazy concert, the playing of the first clarinet, Franklin Cohen, the soloist in Mozart's concerto, was highly praised. Let me pay tribute to the contributions of the first flute, Jeffrey Khaner, to the Bruckner and of the English horn, Felix Kraus, to the Schoenberg.

ELEVEN years ago, a young Russian-émigré conductor, Semyon Bychkov, was praised in these columns for his sensitive conducting of Tchaikovsky's "Iolanta," in a Mannes College production. Since then, Mr. Bychkov has become famous, especially for his concerts and recordings with the Berlin Philharmonic. Last week, he brought the Buffalo Philharmonic, of which he became the music director in 1985, to


E.L. DOCTOROW

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Carnegie Hall. His account of Mahler's Sixth Symphony was clearly planned and efficiently executed, but unmoving, uninspired. There seemed to be little naturalness, little *feeling*, in the tempo changes. The symphony was preceded by a Mozart violin concerto, K. 218, which Anne-Sophie Mutter played cleanly, with immaculate intonation.

Earlier in the season, there was an amusing Carnegie concert at which the Philadelphia Orchestra was conducted by Yuri Temirkanov. For over a decade, Mr. Temirkanov has been the artistic director and principal conductor of the Kirov Opera, in Leningrad. He is also a stage director there. In addition, one discovered at the Philadelphia's concert, he is a mime, a dancer, and a comedian—slim, trim, and energetic. He enacted vivid accounts of Stravinsky's "Petrushka" and Tchaikovsky's "Manfred" Symphony—not in the elegant, exquisite way that Carlos Kleiber shapes "La Bohème" but more in a manner to suggest a one-man Massine ballet executed *sur place*. The Philadelphia players responded to this unconventional direction with colorful but not always precise playing.

New York's orchestral season began, as I wrote in October, with two noble Carnegie concerts from the Vienna Philharmonic and Leonard Bernstein. Nothing that I heard after them, until the Cleveland-Dohnányi Bruckner Seventh, reached that level. In November, in Avery Fisher Hall, Mr. Bernstein conducted the New York Philharmonic in Mahler's First and Third Symphonies. Both were grandly and lovingly shaped, but the Philharmonic's playing was not warmly beautiful, and the audience shuffled and fidgeted. The orchestra seems reluctant ever to play softly. The brasses tend to overwhelm everything else. At a later concert, conducted by Zubin Mehta, they blared and glared through Wagner's "Rienzi" Overture. Maria João Pires made her New York début as a poetic, individual interpreter of Beethoven's Fourth Piano Concerto; Mr. Mehta offered but routine accompaniment. Steve Reich's "The Four Sections"—first played last year by the San Francisco Symphony—followed, but in a drab, unspirited performance. The players' lack of enthusiasm for such music may be understandable (I share it), but if it is going to be done at all it should be done brightly.

—ANDREW PORTER

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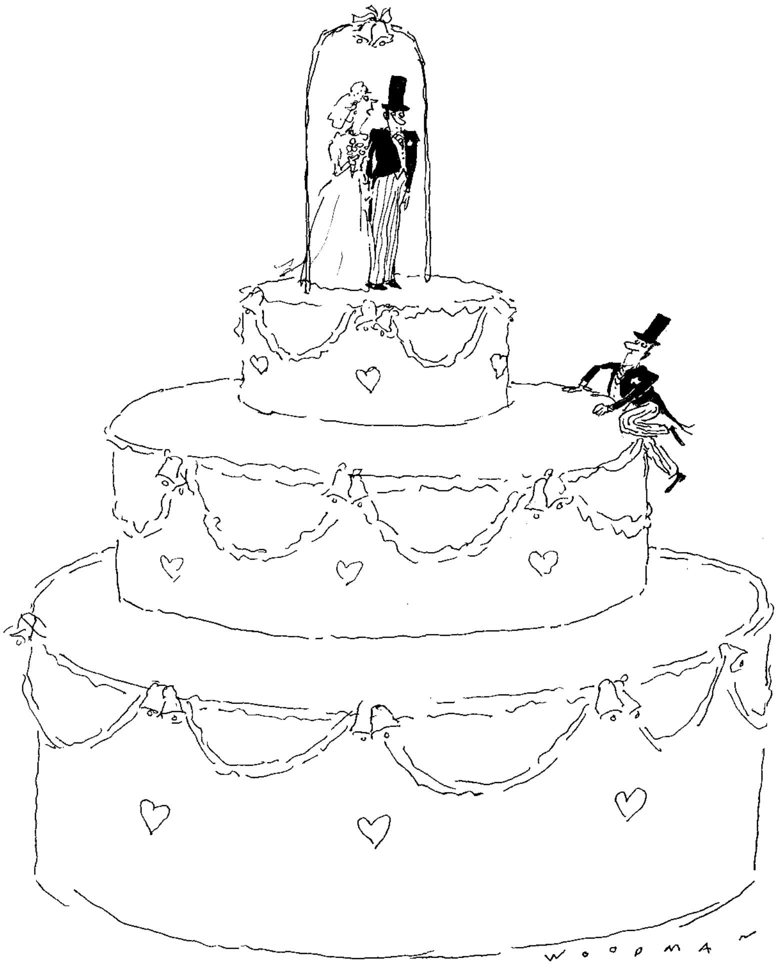
A CRITIC AT LARGE

MANY BENS

The Founding Father

THE Library of America, in advertising its recently issued, sixteen-hundred-page volume of Benjamin Franklin's writings, calls him "the most delightful Founding Father." We do not expect, and it is not certain that we desire, a Founding Father to be delightful. Sober cool white marble is what we have made of these men, and Houdon's bust of Franklin is almost unrecognizable; we miss the spectacles, and the twinkle behind them. The other founders looked at him a bit askance. Of Franklin as he seemed at the Constitutional Convention of 1787 one of the delegates from Georgia, William Pierce, wrote, "Dr. Franklin is well known to be the greatest philosopher of the present age. . . . But what claim he has to the politician, posterity must determine. It is certain that he does not shine much in public council; he is no speaker, nor does he seem to let politics engage his attention. He is, however, a most extraordinary man, and tells a story in a style more engaging than anything I ever heard. . . . He is eighty-two and possesses an activity of mind equal to a youth of twenty-five years of age." A delegate from the other end of the newly united states, Manasseh Cutler of Massachusetts, visited Franklin at his Philadelphia home and found "a short, fat, trunched old man in a plain Quaker dress, bald pate and short white locks, sitting without his hat under the tree." Franklin was the oldest man in attendance, as he had been at the second Continental Congress, a dozen years before. There the dynamic orator John Adams had observed him "from day to day sitting in silence, a great part of the time fast asleep in his chair." At both epochal gatherings in Philadelphia, the local sage, for so much of his life an ornament and servant of the Colonial establishment, and for most of the last thirty years a resident abroad, did not fit into the new aristocracy of lawyers and military men, Massachusetts merchants and Virginia planters who had led the young nation into revolution and independence.

Franklin's traceable contribution to the Declaration of Independence consists of a few emendations to Jefferson's prose—most notably, where Jefferson had written "We hold these truths to be sacred and undeniable" Franklin scratched the two adjectives and substituted "self-evident." At the signing of the document, he supposedly said to John Hancock, "We must indeed all hang together, or most assuredly we shall all hang separately"—but the early biographies make no mention of the remark; it first appeared in print in 1840. In regard to the United States Constitution, his ideas were generally voted down. He favored a single legislature and a plural executive branch whose officers would serve without salary. His speech warning of the dangers of "making our Posts of Honour Places of Profit" was read, in deference to his age and frailty, by his fellow-Pennsylvanian James Wilson; Alexander Hamilton seconded, and the motion, James Madison noted, "was treated with great respect, but rather for the author of it than from any conviction of its expediency or practicability." When Franklin moved—rather surprisingly, for a man once notorious for his Deism and free-thinking—that each session of the assembly begin with a prayer ("The longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this Truth, that GOD *governs in the Affairs of Men.* And if a Sparrow cannot fall to the Ground without his Notice, is it probable that an Empire can rise without his Aid?"), the delegates, but for three or four, said prayers were unnecessary, and one member claimed aloud that the Convention couldn't afford a minister. Franklin's view that the executive should not be allowed an absolute veto over the legislature did prevail, but not his arguments in favor of strictly proportional representation of each state in the federal legislature. His most useful performance was as the author of the compromise that settled upon a proportionally determined House of Representatives and a Senate in which states were equally represented—it carried narrowly, five states against four, with Massachusetts divided and not counted. In the two and a half remaining months of the Convention, Franklin spoke rarely: once, to defend the clause that would make the national executive impeachable;



"Forget it, Carl."

another time, to protest limiting suffrage to freeholders; again, to say that fourteen years of American residence was too long a time to require immigrants to qualify for public office; and, yet again, to oppose a property qualification for officers of the government—"Some of the greatest rogues [I] was ever acquainted with were the richest rogues."

At the Convention's end, he rose to move a unanimous vote in favor of the plan hammered out with so much rancor and apprehension, and containing so few of his pet ideas. His speech breathes a benign democratic faith and the patient fatalism learned in his life of dealings with passive-aggressive Quakers, autocratic minions of the British monarchy, the adroit lords and ladies of the French court, and his testy fellow-revolutionaries:

> I agree to this Constitution, with all its faults,—if they are such; because I think a general Government necessary for us, and there is no *form* of government but what may be a blessing to the people, if well administered; and I believe, farther, that this is likely to be well administered for a course of years, and can only end in despotism, as other forms have done before it, when the people shall become so corrupted as to need despotic government, being incapable of any other.

This blessing, which did much to quiet popular resistance to the centralized form the Constitution had taken, was Franklin's last great gift to his nation. The unanimous vote carried, and the Constitution was eventually ratified. His attempts to place his grandson, William Temple Franklin, and his son-in-law, Richard Bache, in the new government were frustrated; Congress voted him no reward, not even an address of thanks, for his eight years of invaluable diplomacy in France, and declined to settle the accounts of his mission. Franklin died in 1790. He had been of a different generation from the other founders—Washington was twenty-six years younger, John Adams thirty, Jefferson thirty-seven, Madison all of forty-five—and what they had needed from him was his potent presence, as the most celebrated American of the pre-Revolutionary time; they had needed his image.

This image is with us still—in the face on the hundred-dollar bill, in the name that attaches to the Franklin Mint and Franklin and Marshall College, in the Franklin Streets you can find in most Pennsylvania cities, in the twenty-five American counties called Franklin and the upward of thirty towns, in the iconographic vignettes of the young man who walked into Philadelphia with loaves of bread under his arms and of the older man who went out with a kite to capture the lightning, in the living sayings of Poor Richard and the steady warmth of the Franklin stove. A Philadelphia actor called Ralph Archbold offers to impersonate Franklin at schools and conventions and advertises "more than 200 performances annually since 1973;" this is not inappropriate, since Franklin himself was an inveterate impersonator, preferring to write under pseudonyms and bringing to all his life roles a theatrical flair and good-humored adaptability. The image of himself that he projected was versatile, at one point an embodiment of fanatic thrift and industry and at another of pagan rakishness, in one phase a substantial British clubman and in an earlier a lean and penniless journeyman. Reflecting back upon the bulky, farraginous, sometimes tedious and opaque volume that J. A. Leo LeMay has assembled for the Library of America, the reader seems to see many Franklins, one emerging from another like those brightly painted Russian dolls which, ever smaller, disclose yet one more, until a last wooden homunculus, a little smooth nugget like a soul, is reached.

The political patriarch, though the biggest, is in a sense the hollowest Franklin; it is not hard to feel, with Pierce of Georgia, that politics did not engage his attention, at least his deepest and most ardent attention. His non-ironical political writings in this collection are the heaviest going, and not just because the contextual circumstances and tensions are very lightly explained, in accordance with the Library's policy of presenting classic American texts with minimal apparatus. Franklin instinctively saw relations between men and nations as matters of competing self-interest, construed in material terms. Though he mustered a certain patriotic indignation as the American Revolution approached, there is little from his pen that has Thomas Paine's furious sense of an incubuslike British tyranny, or of Jefferson's religious belief in a natural man with sacred rights. From Franklin's vantage in London, the conflict of the seventeen-seventies was brought on by "a corrupt Parliament, that does not like us, and conceives itself to have an Interest in keeping us down and fleecing us." It was a matter of markets and demographics in his analysis, and though a wiser king or less venal ministers might have made some difference, Franklin seems basically resigned, should reasonableness fail, to inevitable historical process. He wrote to Samuel Mather in 1773, "But all these Oppressions evidently work for our Good. Providence seems by every Means intent on making us a great People." Two years earlier, he had confided to his sister Jane, "Upon the whole I am much disposed to like the World as I find it, and to doubt my own Judgment as to what would mend it." Such a doubt makes for a lacklustre inspirator but for a cool and flexible diplomat.

THE FRENCH FRANKLIN

FROM late 1776 to 1785, Franklin served the fledgling, embattled Congress as one of three commissioners to France and, after 1778, as sole minister plenipotentiary. The French took to him, and he to them, amazingly; years and cares seemed to fall from him. "Being arrived at seventy," he wrote from the Paris suburb of Passy to Thomas Bond in Philadelphia, "and considering that by travelling further in the same road I should probably be led to the grave, I stopped short, turned about, and walked back again; which having done these four years, you may now call me sixty-six." While periodically coaxing millions of livres from the French Foreign Minister, the Comte de Vergennes, for the tattered American cause, he fell in love with French ladies and printed flirtatious bagatelles for them, sometimes in French and sometimes in English, on a private press he had imported. The French, seeing in him a mixture of the sage Voltaire and the noble savage predicated by Rousseau, turned him into a knickknack of the Enlightenment. According to Carl Van Doren's biography, "Houdon and Jean-Jacques Caffieri modelled busts, in marble, bronze, and plaster. There were other paintings and busts, miniatures, medallions, statuettes, drawings, and prints, endlessly reproduced, first on snuff-boxes and rings and in time on watches, clocks, vases, dishes, handkerchiefs, and pocket-knives. Probably no man before Franklin had ever had his likeness so widely current in so many forms." His image, often in dark "Quaker" garb and trimmings of fur, was rendered so often he complained, "I have . . . sat so much and so often to painters and statuaries that I am perfectly sick of it."

This image fascinated the French, but the visible reality did not charm his fellow-negotiator John Adams, who complained to his journal:

> I found out that the Business of our Commission would never be done, unless I did it. . . . The Life of Dr. Franklin was a Scene of continual discipation. I could never obtain the favour of his Company in a Morning before Breakfast which would have been the most convenient time to read over the Letters and papers . . . It was late when he breakfasted, and as soon as Breakfast was over, a crowd of Carriages came to his Levee . . . with all sorts of People; some Phylosophers, Accademicians and Economists . . . but by far the greater part were Women and Children, come to have the honour to see the great Franklin, and to have the pleasure of telling Stories about his Simplicity, his bald head and scattering strait hairs, among their Acquaintances.

This riot of "discipation" is not entirely out of character; Franklin had always been sexy. His autobiography confesses how "that hard-to-be-govern'd Passion of Youth, had hurried me frequently into Intrigues with low Women that fell in my Way." Poor Richard, especially in the earlier issues of his Almanack, offers some racy aphorisms: "After 3 days men grow weary, of a wench, a guest, & weather rainy;" "Neither a Fortress nor a Maidenhead will hold out long after they begin to parly;" "She that paints her Face, thinks of her Tail." And his "Old Mistresses Apologue" (1745), advising a young correspondent to resort to older women, startlingly combines medical misinformation with the wisdom of experience:

> Because in every Animal that walks upright, the Deficiency of the Fluids that fill the Muscles appears first in the highest Part: The Face first grows lank and wrinkled; then the Neck; then the Breast and Arms; the lower Parts continuing to the last as plump as ever: So that covering all above with a Basket, and regarding only what is below the Girdle, it is impossible of two Women to know an old from a young one. And as in the dark all Cats are grey, the Pleasure of corporal Enjoyment with an old Woman is at least equal, and frequently superior, every Knack being by Practice capable of Improvement.

By a gray cat whose name was never disclosed, Franklin had fathered an illegitimate son, William. The boy lived with him and his common-law wife, Deborah; a son of theirs, Francis Folger, died at the age of four, in 1736, and a daughter, Sarah, was born in 1743. Franklin's wife (whom he had once fondly likened to a "large fine Jugg for Beer") died two years before his departure to France, and the giddy widower lavished coquettish proposals upon his new female friends. He informed Mme. Brillon that there were twelve Commandments, the extra two being "Increase & multiply & replenish the earth" and "*Love one another*," and advised her that "the most effectual way to get rid of a certain Temptation is, as often as it returns, to comply with and satisfy it." From Mme. La Freté he expected "half a Dozen of your sweet, affectionate, substantial, & heartily applied Kisses," and in the personae of the flies buzzing in his chambers Franklin expressed to Mme. Helvétius the hope that she and he would combine households. Not just John Adams was disapproving; his wife, Abigail, wrote to a friend a mordant description of Mme. Helvétius, dressed in "a Chemise made of Tiffany, which she had on over a blue lute-string, and which looked as much upon the decay as her beauty, for she was once a handsome woman; her hair was frizzled; over it she had a small straw hat, with a dirty gauze half-handkerchief round it, and a bit of dirtier gauze, than ever my maids wore, was bowed on behind." This shabby temptress greeted Franklin with "a double kiss, one upon each cheek, and another upon his forehead," and during dinner was seen "frequently locking her hand into the Doctor's . . . then throwing her arm carelessly upon the Doctor's neck." Mrs. Adams indignantly goes on, "After dinner she threw herself upon a settee, where she showed more than her feet. She had a little lap-dog, who was, next to the Doctor, her favorite. This she kissed, and when he wet the floor she wiped it up with her chemise. This is one of the Doctor's most intimate friends, with whom he dines once every week, and she with him." The revered septuagenarian probably received from these lively Gallic women few favors more carnal than being petted and kissed and teased for his faulty French; but a "naughty" Franklin persisted in the American imagination, taking bawdy forms on the popular stage and figuring in Melville's "Israel Potter." Melville, sixty-five years after Franklin died, sums up the legend:

> Franklin was not less a lady's man, than a man's man, a wise man, and an old man. Not only did he enjoy the homage of the choicest Parisian literati, but at the age of seventy-two he was the caressed favorite of the highest born beauties of the Court; who through blind fashion having been originally attracted to him as a famous *savan*, were permanently retained as his admirers by his Plato-like graciousness of good humor. Having carefully weighed the world, Franklin could act in any part in it. . . . This philosophical levity of tranquillity, so to speak, is shown in his easy variety of pursuits. Printer, postmaster, almanac maker, essayist, chemist, orator, tinker, statesman, humorist, philosopher, parlor man, political economist, professor of housewifery, ambassador, projector, maxim-monger, herb-doctor, wit:—Jack of all trades, master of each and mastered by none—the type and genius of his land. Franklin was everything but a poet.

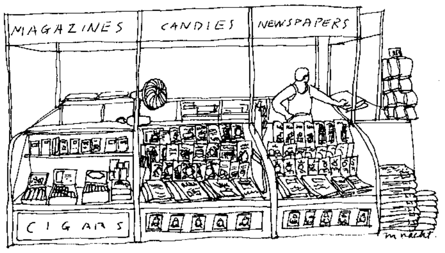
But in his French phase Franklin came closest to being a pure littérateur; in the delicious relaxation of his epicurean twilight, under the stimulus of feminine French wits, he produced bagatelles, parables, parodies of the Bible, and unclassifiable *œuvrets* (a word of his coinage) that are to the run of his prose as silk is to serviceable muslin. His "Dialogue Between the Gout and Mr. Franklin" (imitating a poem by Mme. Brillon and annotated and corrected by her) has, for all its airy form, real midnight power; the former stern advocate of temperance is rebuked by the voice of pain as "a glutton and a tippler" and told, "You philosophers are sages in your maxims, and fools in your conduct." The dialogue ends on an eerie puritanical note as the Gout assures its sufferer that "my object is your good, and you are sensible now that I am your *real friend*." Apparently unpersuaded, in this same period Franklin drew (or had one of his grandsons draw) for the freethinking Abbé Morellet some anatomical sketches inviting "your piety and gratitude to Divine Providence" for its having placed the elbow just where convenient for bringing a glass to the mouth: "Let us, then, with glass in hand, adore this benevolent wisdom;—let us adore and drink!" And in an earthy spoof of scientific research Franklin proposed experiments "*To discover some Drug wholesome & not disagreable, to be mix'd with our common Food, or Sauces, that shall render* *the natural Discharges of Wind from our Bodies, not only inoffensive, but agreable as Perfumes.*" Delightful, indeed.

The English Franklin

FROM 1757 to 1762, and—after a rather tumultuous and unsatisfactory interval back in Philadelphia—from 1764 to 1775, Franklin lived in London, as the agent of the Pennsylvania Assembly, to negotiate its long-standing and intractable differences with the Proprietors, Richard and Thomas Penn. Later, he was appointed the agent of the legislatures of Georgia, New Jersey, and Massachusetts as well. He did secure from the Privy Council in 1760 the concession that the lands of the Proprietors would be no longer exempt from taxation. His defense of the American position before the Committee of the Whole of the House of Commons in 1766 contributed to the repeal of the Stamp Act and established him as the preëminent representative of the Colonies. Though his fifteen years in England were fruitful of little else in the way of political agreement, and ended in bloody revolution and a hasty return, for him they were years rich in honors and sociability.

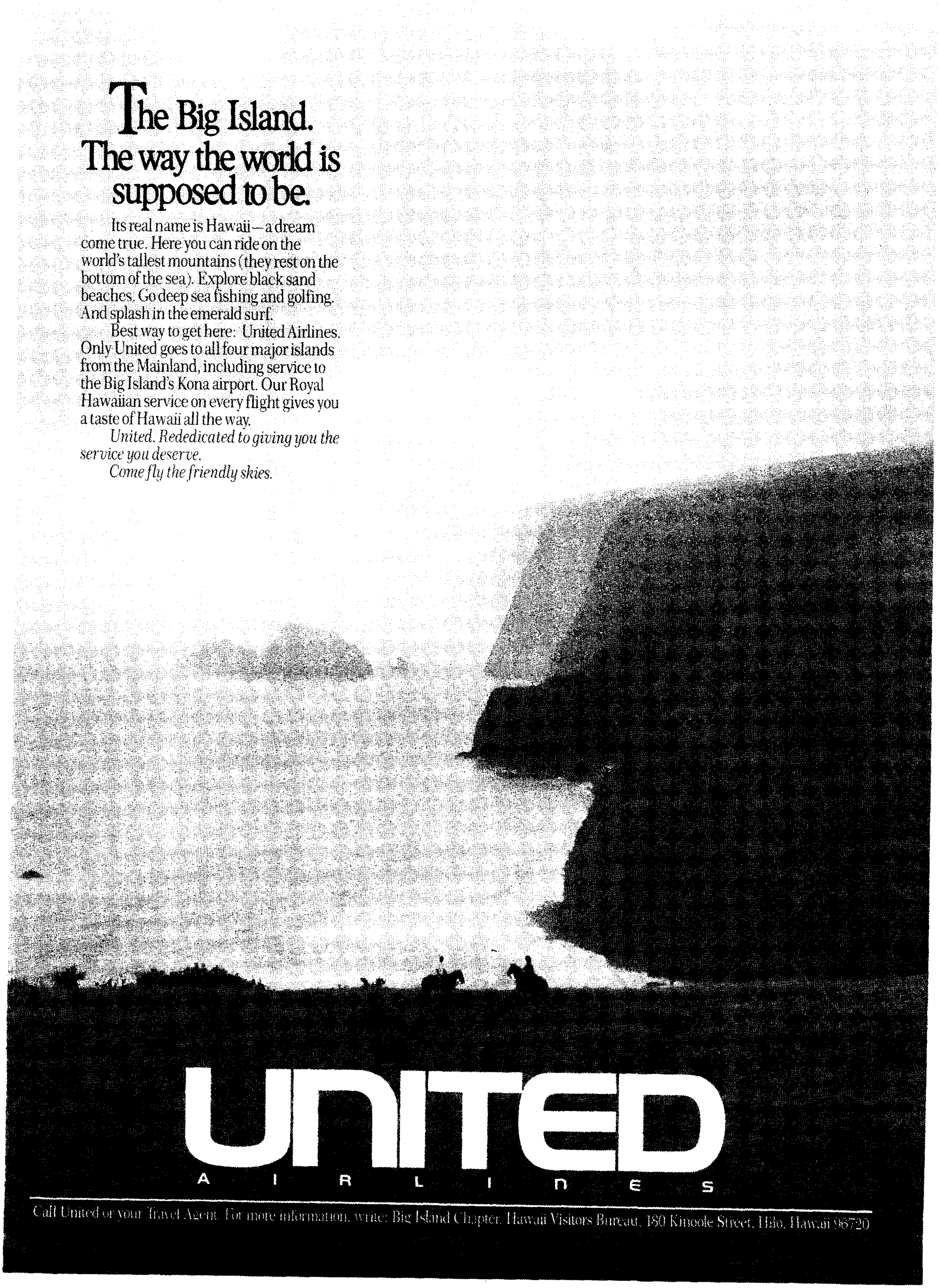
In France, he took on the fantastic, delicate coloration of a dream realm, an aristocratic world of powdered wigs and romantic intrigue, of balloon ascents and literary games enacted in the gossamer last days of the *ancien régime*—a regime bankrupted, in part, by the American aid Franklin had coaxed from it. Writing near the end of his life to Mme. Helvétius, he talked of dreams: "*Et souvent dans mes Songes, je dejeune avec vous, je me place au coté de vous sur une de votre mille sofas, ou je promène avec vous dans votre belle jardin*" ("And often in my dreams I dine with you, I sit beside you on one of your thousand sofas"—a touch of the poet, surely, in that—"or I walk with you in your beautiful garden"). In England, things were solid, sooty, burly, clamorous, and masculine. After a while, he stayed, it seemed, only because it suited him. The purpose of his second mission had been to petition the king to take over the government of Pennsylvania from the Penns, and to persuade the Ministry and Parliament to recognize the Assembly as the legislative authority of the province. In the words of Bernard Faÿ's biography, "Franklin walked from one anteroom to another, with his eternal petition in his hand, hearing nothing but words which were more and more vague, and receiving invitations to dinner which were more and more cordial." According to Faÿ, his position became increasingly equivocal, and eventually untenable: "He continued to serve with Foxcroft as the postmaster-general of America, which was a royal office; he was agent for the Pennsylvania Assembly, which was very moderate, for the New Jersey government of his son, which was very Tory, and for the Massachusetts Assembly, which was very radical." Yet even after his humiliating dismissal as deputy postmaster general, early in 1774, as punishment for his disclosure of some secret government letters to the Massachusetts Assembly, he lingered another year, while his wife lay dying in Philadelphia. Jug-shaped Deborah was afraid of sea voyages and had twice refused to accompany him abroad.

Within a few days of his London arrival in 1757, Franklin had found lodgings in Craven Street, Strand, with Margaret Stevenson, a widow his age, and her daughter Mary, called Polly. This surrogate household, echoing in composition that of the wife and daughter he had left behind in Philadelphia, remained his home for all his English years; when, in 1772, Mrs. Stevenson moved a few doors away, her distinguished lodger moved with her. She cooked for him and nursed him when he was sick. According to Claude-Anne Lopez and Eugenia W. Herbert in their lively "The Private Franklin," "People fell into a habit of inviting them together or sending greetings to both." Were they, in his fifteen years beneath her roof, lovers? Some historians speculate that his amorous favor fell instead upon her daughter, who was eighteen when they first met. Before Polly Stevenson's marriage, to Dr. William Hewson, Franklin wrote long, paternally instructive letters to her, and she was responsive enough to attempt communicating in the phonetic alphabet he had invented, of which the Library of America includes three eye-boggling pages. After her husband's death, she came to Philadelphia at Franklin's invitation, stayed four years, until his death, and stayed five years more, until her own death, even though she had complained in a letter to her son, "Nothing but insignificance or slavery awaits a woman here."



In London, on the face of it, Franklin behaved as head of the Stevenson household and used it as the comfortable base of his flattering English life. An American friend, after visiting Craven Street, reported that "Doctor Franklin looks heartier than I ever knew him in America." He became a man-about-town. As earlier in Philadelphia and later in France, his devoted membership in the Masons opened doors and cemented friendships. While still in America, he had been elected a member of the Royal Society and of the Premium Society, or Society of Arts. He received awards and honorary degrees, and, summers, travelled in the British Isles and on the Continent, receiving more honors. He frequented taverns and coffeehouses, usually dining on Mondays at the George and Vulture with a group of scientists, and on Thursdays with the Club of Honest Whigs at St. Paul's Coffeehouse. "Conversation warms the mind," he wrote one of his many new friends, Lord Kames. Not only was Franklin's one of those reputations, like Poe's and Faulkner's, that the French returned to us enhanced but he was one of those Americans, like James and Eliot, who found refuge in England from the thinness of native cultural life. Temporarily back in Philadelphia in 1763, he wrote Polly, "Of all the enviable Things England has, I envy it most its People. Why should that petty Island . . . enjoy in almost every Neighbourhood, more sensible, virtuous and elegant Minds, than we can collect in ranging 100 Leagues of our vast Forests."

His renown as a scientist, especially as an "electrician," had preceded him and smoothed his way, and it is the scientific passages in the London pages of the Library of America Franklin that form the easiest reading and best give the impression of a mind congenially engaged. These years began with his penning, on the boat across the Atlantic, the haranguing summary of Poor Richard's cautionary sayings which, variously titled, was to enjoy wide circulation and many translations. During his Philadelphia hiatus, he wrote perhaps his fiercest and most eloquent pamphlet, decrying the slaughter of twenty friendly Indians



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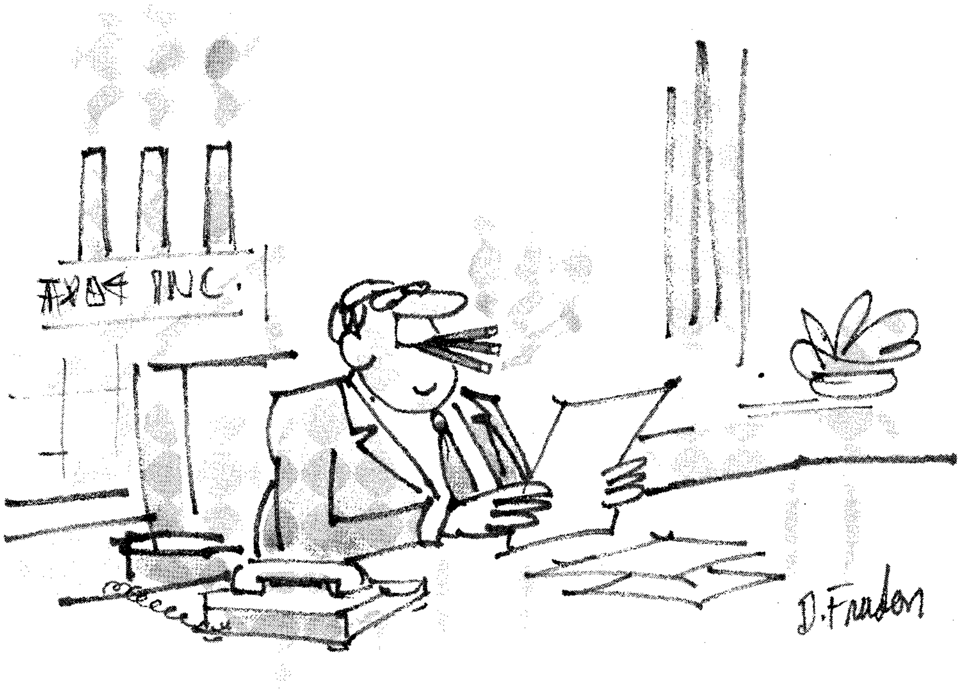
living peaceably in Lancaster by a gang of Scotch-Irish farmers calling themselves the Paxton Boys, in reaction to Indian massacres along the Pennsylvania frontier. Franklin's passionate language still stings: "What had little Boys and Girls done; what could Children of a Year old, Babes at the Breast, what could they do, that they too must be shot and hatcheted? —Horrid to relate!—and in their Parents Arms! This is done by no civilized Nation in *Europe*. Do we come to *America* to learn and practise the Manners of *Barbarians*? But this, *Barbarians* as they are, they practise against their Enemies only, not against their Friends."



The bulk of the topical articles and ironical letters published in England, under a parade of pseudonyms—*A New Englandman*, A BRITON, The SPECTATOR, A TRAVELLER, N.N., PACIFICUS SECUNDUS, HOMESPUN, F.B., AMERICANUS, ARATOR, *A Friend to both Countries*—have rather outworn their complicated occasions. When his sister Jane asked him for a collection of his recent political pieces, Franklin wrote her, "They were most of them written occasionally for transient Purposes, and having done their Business, they die and are forgotten. I could as easily make a Collection for you of all the past Parings of my Nails." Only when the irony—aimed now from a British persona, now from an American—grows outrageous does the piece still throw off a spark, as when whales are alleged to leap up the Niagara Falls in the pursuit of cod ("one of the finest Spectacles in Nature!") or, in a hoax that was taken seriously in some quarters, the King of Prussia is supposed to be promulgating an edict demanding, since ancient Britain was a kind of German colony, that all British cargoes be unloaded and taxed in Königsberg, on the analogy of regulations and duties imposed by the Crown upon the American Colonies. As Boston was blockaded and American blood shed, Franklin's satires became more savage and Swiftian. One of them provides a slogan that Jefferson proposed as a motto for the great seal of the United States: "REBELLION TO TYRANTS IS OBEDIENCE TO GOD."

The reader enters sweeter, less swift-flowing waters in those letters which deal with science, either in lessons to Polly Stevenson or in consultation with such learned men as John Pringle, David Hume, Oliver Neave, Thomas Percival, Benjamin Rush, and William Brownrigg. Eighteenth-century science lay in the care of amateurs and permitted a curious-minded original like Franklin to roam productively across a wide range of elementary phenomena. How and why evaporation cools, how raindrops accumulate, why oil calms water, why a low canal pulls harder than a full one, why rock strata are jumbled, what strange old teeth and tusks signify—such questions are attacked at the level of common sense and everyday life. Franklin describes an experiment in chromatic heat conduction charming in its simplicity, though rigorous and conclusive:

> My Experiment was this. I took a number of little Square Pieces of Broad Cloth from a Taylor's Pattern Card, of various Colours. There were Black, deep Blue, lighter Blue, Green, Purple, Red, Yellow, White, and other Colours or Shades of Colours. I laid them all out upon the Snow in a bright Sunshiny Morning. In a few Hours (I cannot now be exact as to the Time) the Black being warm'd most by the Sun was sunk so low as to be below the Stroke of the Sun's Rays; the dark Blue almost as low, the lighter Blue not quite so much as the dark, the other Colours less as they were lighter; and the quite White remain'd on the Surface of the Snow, not having entred it at all. What signifies Philosophy that does not apply to some Use? May we not learn from hence, that black Cloaths are not so fit to wear in a hot Sunny Climate or Season as white ones?

With the revelations of microscopy barely dawned upon them, Franklin and his contemporaries groped in the familiar macrocosm. He almost arrived at the germ theory of disease: "I have long been satisfy'd from Observation, that . . . People often catch Cold from one another when shut up together in small close Rooms, Coaches, &c. and when sitting near and conversing so as to breathe in each others Transpiration, the Disorder being in a certain State. I think too that it is the frowzy corrupt Air from animal Substances, and the perspired Matter from our Bodies, which . . . obtains that kind of Putridity which infects us." His Philadelphia experiments with electricity, demonstrating that lightning and static electricity were the same "Fluid" and leading to his invention of the lightning rod, made him celebrated in scientific circles and popularly regarded as something of a wizard, like Swedenborg and Cagliostro. On at least one occasion, Franklin acted the part. At Lord Shelburne's castle, while a large party was walking outdoors, Franklin volunteered that he could calm the waters quite as easily as Jesus Christ. Meeting general disbelief, he went to a pond that was being rippled in the breeze, raised the staff with which he had been walking, whirled it three times above the water, and signed the air with a magic hieroglyph. In a few minutes, the company was astonished to see, the pond became glassy as a mirror. The magician later revealed that his staff was hollow and had been filled with oil. Franklin had been fascinated by the calming effects of oil upon water while observing a swinging lamp on one of his eight trips across the Atlantic. And he also employed these long crossings to study and describe the Gulf Stream—the first scientist to do so. Worlds lay open to his endless curiosity, and he once wrote to Joseph Priestley, "The rapid Progress *true* Science now makes, occasions my regretting sometimes that I was born so soon."

The Philadelphia Franklin

ALONE and almost penniless, Franklin came to Philadelphia at the age of seventeen. The next day, he had found work, as a journeyman printer, and within six years he and a partner owned their own press and newspaper, the *Pennsylvania Gazette.* His business, which included a shop that sold stationery, books, quills, ink, slates, parchment, sealing wax, foodstuffs, patent medicines, cloth, stoves, and even slaves and the unexpired terms of indentured servants, prospered to such an extent that in 1748, at the age of forty-two, he felt free to retire and devote himself to scientific research and civic affairs. Though by 1725 Philadelphia was the second-biggest city in the English-speaking world, it seems to have been an institutional wasteland, wherein Franklin founded or was a prime mover in organizing the first self-improvement and mutual-aid society, the Junto (1727), the first subscription library (1731), the first German-language newspaper (1732), the first fire company (1736), the first citizen militia (1747), the Colonies' first learned society, the American Philosophical Society (1743), the city's first college, the Philadelphia Academy, which became the University of Pennsylvania (1749), the first hospital (1751), and the first American fire-insurance company (1751). He also proposed and supervised the first plans to sweep and light Philadelphia's streets, not to mention proclaiming the Province's first fast day, on January 7, 1748. This Philadelphia Franklin, the tireless improver of self and surroundings, is the one most deeply settled in American legend. His autobiography lists his "firsts," describes his rise, and contains a detailed prescription, with a handy checklist, for attaining "moral Perfection." It is this document, along with the repeated admonitions to thrift and prudence in Poor Richard's Almanacks, that goaded D. H. Lawrence to protest, "I am not a mechanical contrivance," and to sneer:

> The perfectibility of man, dear God! When every man as long as he remains alive is in himself a multitude of conflicting men. Which of these do you choose to perfect, at the expense of every other?
>
> Old Daddy Franklin will tell you. He'll rig him up for you, the pattern American. Oh, Franklin was the first downright American. He knew what he was about, the sharp little man. He set up the first dummy American.

And yet Franklin's autobiography is a very unmechanical, elastically insouciant work, full of cheerful contradictions and humorous twists—a fond look back upon an earlier self, giving that intensely ambitious young man the benefit of the older man's relaxation. He loves his younger self—his strength, his scrapes. He relates amusingly how the young man tried to seduce his friend's mistress, and how he gave up vegetarianism when confronted with some tasty cod: "When the Fish were opened, I saw smaller Fish taken out of their Stomachs:—Then, thought I, if you eat one another, I don't see why we mayn't eat you . . . So convenient a thing is it to be a *reasonable Creature*, since it enables one to find or make a Reason for every thing one has a mind to do." The autobiography's first, and masterly, part was written in the form of a letter to his son William, in two weeks of a summer visit to the English countryside, at Bishop Shipley's residence, in Twyford, when Franklin was sixty-five. It breaks off as the Philadelphia Franklin is founding the subscription library, and was resumed in 1784, in the idyll of Passy, without the earlier section's being at hand. It then breaks off in a discussion of how to subdue the natural passion of Pride, and was taken up again in 1788, and carried forward into the beginnings of the English mission in 1757, but breaks off a last time, as the by now very aged writer bogs down in the details of futile bygone negotiations. But the details of his unheralded arrival in Philadelphia—the weary boy in dirty clothes, the unexpected type and quantity of bread he gets for three pennies, the two excess rolls carried one under each arm, the amused glance from the girl who was to become his wife, the involuntary nap in the Quaker meeting—have passed into American mythology, and have the advantage over Parson Weems' tale of Washington and the cherry tree of being possibly true. These pages by Franklin, from his Boston departure to his employment by the printer Samuel Kiemer, are a surpassingly vivid window into Colonial life:

> In crossing the Bay we met with a Squall that tore our rotten Sails to pieces, prevented our getting into the Kill, and drove us upon Long Island. In our Way a drunken Dutchman, who was a Passenger too, fell over board; when he was sinking I reach'd thro' the Water to his shock Pate & drew him up so that we got him in again.—His Ducking sober'd him a little, & he went to sleep, taking first out of his Pocket a Book which he desir'd I would dry for him. It prov'd to be my old favourite *Author Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress* in Dutch, finely printed on good Paper with copper Cuts, a Dress better than I had ever seen it wear in its own Language.

At a later stage of this long, damp journey, while walking fifty miles across New Jersey, Franklin encounters "an itinerant Doctor," who "was ingenious, but much of an Unbeliever, & wickedly undertook some Years after to travesty the Bible in doggrel Verse as Cotton had done Virgil." Thus in the space of a few paragraphs the seventeen-year-old pilgrim meets types of drunkenness and unbelief, and has reason to remember the two Puritan authors, John Bunyan and Cotton Mather, who stand behind his own progress. As his Philadelphia career evolves, other characters—Kiemer, gluttonous and disorganized; Governor William Keith, who out of empty vanity sends the boy on a fool's errand to England; James Ralph, who deserts his wife and child and wastes Franklin's money—serve as bad examples amid whose sinking the young hero, a great swimmer, can be felt almost physically to be rising, toward Virtue and Happiness.

The close relation between virtue and happiness is his great perception. "I grew convinc'd that *Truth*, *Sincerity & Integrity* in Dealings between Man & Man, were of the utmost Importance to the Felicity of Life." "It was my Design to explain and enforce this Doctrine, that Vicious Actions are not hurtful because they are forbidden, but forbidden because they are hurtful, the Nature of Man alone consider'd: That it was therefore every ones Interest to be virtuous, who wish'd to be happy even in this World." And this recognition is not itself enough: "I concluded at length, that the mere speculative Conviction that it was our Interest to be compleatly virtuous, was not sufficient to prevent our Slipping, and that the contrary Habits must be broken and good Ones acquired and established." Hence, the self-conditioning of his list of thirteen virtues and their daily checklist, detested by D. H. Lawrence and touchingly echoed in the journal of F. Scott Fitzgerald's aspiring bootlegger Jay Gatsby. Franklin's criterion of utility works as well the other way: a Deist by fifteen, in rejection of his parents' strict Presbyterianism, and at nineteen the author of a published dissertation skillfully arguing that God sees no evil in the Universe and that "since every Action is the Effect of Self-Uneasiness" there can be no distinction between virtue and vice, Franklin at twenty-two (according to Franklin at sixty-five) "began to suspect that this Doctrine [Deism] tho' it might be true, was not very useful." Usefulness is all. "What signifies Philosophy that does not apply to some Use?" There is, he wrote in the *Gazette*, a "SCIENCE OF VIRTUE" that is "of more consequence to . . . Happiness than all the rest put together." "Virtue and Happiness are Mother and Daughter," Poor Richard said, and, most famously, "Early to bed and early to rise, makes a man healthy wealthy and wise"—the lack of commas emphasizing, perhaps, the interchangeability of health, wealth, and wisdom. Among the assertions of Poor Richard is *not* "Honesty is the best policy;" this saying dates from the sixteenth century and appears in the "Apophthegms" of Archbishop Whately of Dublin, with an interesting second thought: "Honesty is the best policy; but he who is governed by that maxim is not an honest man."

Those who would find Franklin's practical morality too hard-hearted and smugly anti-rational should try to imagine the profligate, besozzled, rather murderous New World it was meant to tame. The Library of America reprints a number of news items that Franklin is now believed to have written for the *Pennsylvania Gazette:*

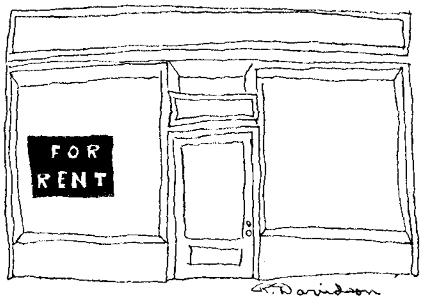
> We hear from the Jersey side, that a Man near Sahaukan being disordred in his Senses, protested to his Wife that he would kill her immediately, if she did not put her Tongue into his Mouth: She through Fear complying, he bit off a large Piece of it, and taking it between his Fingers threw it into the Fire with these Words, *Let this be for a Burnt-Offering.*
>
> Last Monday Morning a Woman who had been long given to excessive Drinking, was found dead in a Room by her self, upon the Floor. . . . Her former Husband had many Times put several Sorts of odious Physick into her Drink, in order to give her an Aversion to it, but in vain; for who ever heard of a Sot reclaim'd?
>
> Saturday last, at a Court of Oyer and Terminer held here, came on the Tryal of a Man and his Wife, who were indicted for the Murder of a Daughter which he had by a former Wife, (a Girl of about 14 Years of Age) by turning her out of Doors, and thereby exposing her to such Hardships, as afterwards produced grievous Sickness and Lameness; during which, instead of supplying her with Necessaries and due Attendance, they treated her with the utmost Cruelty and Barbarity, suffering her to lie and rot in her Nastiness, and when she cried for Bread giving her into her Mouth with an Iron Ladle, her own Excrements to eat.

To be a civilizing force in such a world is no despicable achievement. If Poor Richard's advice "Get what you can, and what you get hold" is a long way from "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth," his assertion "When you're good to others, you are best to yourself" is not far from the Golden Rule.

The writings from these Philadelphia years show an ebullient spirit. Franklin's parodies can be hilarious, as when he versifies the speech of Virginia's Governor Sir William Gooch, whose capitol building had burned down early in 1747:

> L—d have Mercy on us!—the CAPITOL!
> the CAPITOL! is burnt down!
> O astonishing Fate!—which occasions
> this Meeting in Town . . .
> Mean time the College and Court of
> Hustings our *Weight* may sustain,
> But pray let us speedily have our CAPITOL,
> our important CAPITOL again.

In that same year, he printed the famous "Speech of Miss Polly Baker" (1747), in which, supposedly, a Connecticut woman, being for the fifth time prosecuted for bearing a bastard, argues her case with such spirited and persuasive rhetoric that one of the judges marries her the next day. "How can it be believed," she asks, "that Heaven is angry at my having Children, when, to the little done by me towards it, God has been pleased to add his divine Skill and admirable Workmanship in the Formation of their Bodies, and crown'd it by furnishing them with rational and immortal Souls?" Franklin's voice warmed to the feminist cause and its defiance of legislated Puritan morality, and made Polly Baker so real that for years she was thought to be an actual person, cited in debate both in the Colonies and abroad. But John Adams thought the jape one more of Franklin's "Outrages to Morality and Decorum."



The Philadelphia Franklin, one should not forget, had enemies. His satire could bite and his liberalism offend. The clergy and the pious distrusted him for impiety. The Scotch-Irish Presbyterians remembered that he had defended the Indians against the "Christian white savages" of the Paxton gang, and the German immigrants that he had called them, in one of his few outbursts of ethnic prejudice, "Palatine boors [who] will never adopt our Language or Customs, any more than they can acquire our Complexion." To the Quakers who had created in Philadelphia an atmosphere more congenial to him than the musty theocracy of Boston, he nevertheless must have seemed an upstart. One of two deputy postmasters general since 1751, he used the office as a private fiefdom, staffing post offices up and down the coast with relatives and friends. And there was real enmity between him and the Penns and their deputies. In the Pennsylvania Assembly election of 1764, Franklin was defeated, though narrowly, on both the city and county lists, and the following year, after his return to England, Deborah was obliged to bring in guns and some male reinforcements to defend their house from a mob that believed Franklin to have been too soft on the Stamp Act. He did hold some political offices: clerk of the Assembly for fifteen years (he doodled at mathematical puzzles to relieve his boredom), Assembly representative from Philadelphia from 1751 to 1764, and from 1785 to 1788 president of the Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania—in effect, state governor. But his standing was always better with the people at large than with the establishment. Democratic in his instincts, a publicist by trade, he projected a popular image, sometimes calculatedly. The autobiography confides, "In order to secure my Credit and Character as a Tradesman, I took Care not only to be in *Reality* Industrious & frugal, but to avoid all *Appearances* of the Contrary. . . . To show that I was not above my Business, I sometimes brought home the Paper I purchas'd at the

Stores, thro' the Streets on a Wheelbarrow."

The Boston Franklin

FRANKLIN was born in January of 1706 in a rented house on Milk Street near Marlborough, opposite Old South Church. His father, Josiah, was a Nonconformist dyer from Northamptonshire who, rather than submit to the Church of England, had moved to the New World in his twenties and become a maker of candles and soap in Boston. Josiah fathered a total of seventeen children, ten by his second wife, Abiah Folger, from Nantucket. Benjamin was the fifteenth of these seventeen, and the youngest son; though a few of his siblings died in infancy, and the oldest were gone by the time he appeared, he could remember thirteen children sitting down at one time at his father's table. In his autobiography he has a fair amount to say of his father—Josiah's trade, his musical ability, his mechanical skill, his "sound Understanding, and solid Judgment in prudential Matters," his improving discourse at meals—but only this of his mother: "My Mother had likewise an excellent Constitution. She suckled all her 10 Children. I never knew either my Father or Mother to have any Sickness but that of which they dy'd, he at 89 & she at 85 Years of age."

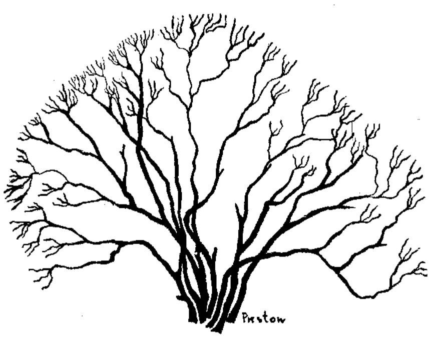
In an age when medical remedies for disease consisted mainly of deleterious purges and bleedings, a good constitution was to be treasured, and Franklin's memories of himself as a boy show him swimming and fishing in the Boston salt marshes, and, in one incident, inciting his friends to appropriate some building stones to make a wharf. He concocted artificial flippers to improve his swimming and once let himself be pulled along in the water by a kite. At the age of seven, he impulsively gave all his halfpence to another boy for a whistle he fancied, and was mocked by his siblings for the extravagance; over sixty years later, he made of the memory a moralistic bagatelle to charm and edify Mme. Brillon. Franklin could not remember a time when he couldn't read. In his one year at Boston Grammar School (which had a classical curriculum, and became the Boston Latin School) he advanced to the head of the class. But his father, after placing him at George Brownell's English School for another year, brought him home to the candle and soap business. Yet Josiah Franklin was not entirely insensitive to the needs of his gifted Benjamin. Registering the boy's distaste for chandlery, and fearful of his running off to sea as an older brother had, he shopped with him for a vocation: "He therefore sometimes took me to walk with him, and see Joiners, Bricklayers, Turners, Braziers, &c. at their Work, that he might observe my Inclination, & endeavor to fix it on some Trade or other on Land." At one point, Benjamin was to be apprenticed as a cutler to his cousin Samuel, but finally, out of deference to his passion for reading, he was apprenticed to his brother John, who in 1717 had returned from England to set up as a printer in Boston.

In discussing his childhood reading, Franklin first mentions "The Pilgrim's Progress," from which he moved on to Bunyan's other works. His father's "little Library consisted chiefly of Books in polemic Divinity, most of which I read, and have since often regretted, that at a time when I had such a Thirst for Knowledge, more proper Books had not fallen in my Way." He read Plutarch's "Lives," and "a Book of Defoe's called an Essay on Projects and another of Dr Mather's call'd Essays to do Good, which perhaps gave me a Turn of Thinking that had an Influence on some of the principal future Events of my Life." Later, he came upon "an odd Volume of the Spectator," and fell under the spell of Addison and Steele:

> I thought the Writing excellent, & wish'd if possible to imitate it. With that view, I took some of the Papers, & making short Hints of the Sentiment in each Sentence, laid them by a few Days, and then without looking at the Book, try'd to compleat the Papers again, by expressing each hinted Sentiment at length & as fully as it express'd before, in any suitable Words that should come to hand.
>
> Then I compar'd my Spectator with the Original, discover'd some of my Faults & corrected them.

Such exercises brought him to a precocious proficiency; when his brother John's press undertook to bring out a newspaper, the *New-England Courant*, Benjamin slipped an epistolary contribution, ostensibly from a middle-aged widow called Silence Dogood, under the door at night; it was admired by John's literary friends and printed. Nor was this the first of Franklin's published writings; earlier still, when he was a mere twelve, he wrote and his brother printed and distributed a ballad called "The Light House Tragedy," based upon a misfortune that befell the keeper of the Boston light and his family in late 1718. Though it "sold wonderfully, the Event being recent, having made a great Noise," no copy survives, and Franklin's father, "by ridiculing my Performances, and telling me Verse-makers were generally Beggars," discouraged his career in balladmongery.

The Silence Dogood letters, of which there were eventually fourteen, open the Library of America collection on a transsexual note. Asking the reader to "bear with my Humours now and then," Mrs. Dogood explains how "nothing is more common with us Women, than to be grieving for nothing, when we have nothing else to grieve for." Though the adolescent boy does not always succeed in maintaining the female persona—"her" satires on Harvard College and New England poetry have quite a masculine ring—the androgyny of Franklin's imagination, from the speech of Polly Baker to his literary gallantries among the ladies of Paris, is one of his surprising qualities. His appreciation of women must have begun with the one who suckled all ten of her children, and continued with his younger sisters, Lydia and Jane; the two children immediately older than he in the vast sibling constellation, both of them brothers, died young, leaving him the oldest child and only male in this last group of three. Jane, who became Jane Mecom, was his favorite, and letters passed between them to the year of his death. She survived him, and wrote his daughter, Sarah Bache, in condolence, "He while living was to me every enjoyment. Whatever other pleasures were, as they mostly took their rise from him, they passed like little streams from a beautiful fountain."



The phenomenal creative energy that was to produce a model citizen in Philadelphia burst its mold in Boston; Franklin broke with his brother, who beat him, "tho' He was otherwise not an ill-natur'd Man: Perhaps I was too saucy & provoking." Also, the *Courant* had several times offended the authorities, who had jailed John and prohibited him from publishing; in response Benjamin was listed as publisher. His ninth Silence Dogood letter began, "It has been for some Time a Question with me, Whether a Commonwealth suffers more by hypocritical Pretenders to Religion, or by the openly Profane? But some late Thoughts of this Nature, have inclined me to think, that the Hypocrite is the most dangerous Person of the Two, especially if he sustains a Post in the Government." In the autobiography Franklin says, "I was the rather inclin'd to leave Boston, when I reflected that I had already made my self a little obnoxious, to the governing Party." Though in the course of his far-ranging career he seldom returned to his native city, he exchanged letters with his family, attempted to reassure them that he was not such an infidel as was rumored, supplied financial aid and patronage, and to his last days identified himself by the trade he had learned there: printer.

Arranging words letter by letter in metal is an intellectual form of manufacture, and fits a man for a life of careful making. Spoken words were not Franklin's métier; he tells of being bettered in eloquence as a child, and early in his Philadelphia years a friend said of him, "In his common Conversation, he seems to have no Choice of Words; he hesitates and blunders; and yet, good God, how he writes!" It is as a maker that he impressed his contemporaries, and impresses us. Franklin defined Man (according to Boswell, in his "Life of Johnson") as a "tool-making animal." In his autobiography he tells how, after his trade-seeking walks with his father, "it has ever since been a Pleasure to me to see good Workmen handle their Tools; and it has been useful to me, having learnt so much by it, as to be able to do little Jobs my self in my House, when a Workman could not readily be got; & to construct little Machines for my Experiments." His inventiveness never ceased; the "trunched old man" who received visitors during the Constitutional Convention would show them his mechanical arm for removing books from high shelves, his letter copier, his chair with a seat that became a ladder, his armchair with its mechanical fan. His enduring inventions range from his stove and lightning rod to bifocals and the glass harmonica. In the New World wilderness, man of necessity became *Homo faber*, and of all the improvising artificers of apple corers, gearboxes, and computer chips Franklin is the patron saint.

In a sense, too, his successive selves were artifacts—self-made men. He remade the Puritan in him into a zealous bourgeois, and certainly this is his main meaning for the American psyche: a release into the Enlightenment of the energies cramped under Puritanism, and a Middle Atlantic model of virtue distinct from the ossified pieties of the Mathers and Adamses. The step from Cotton Mather (a considerable dabbler in science and public works himself) was not a long one, but Franklin took it. Mather, though tainted by his involvement in the 1692 witch trials, was still the dominant intellectual presence in Franklin's Boston; young Benjamin heard him preach, and even enjoyed an audience with him in 1723. The preacher's home had a passage with a low beam, and when the young man hit his head Mather advised him, in the hard accents of Poor Richard, "Let this be a Caution to you not always to hold your Head so high; Stoop, young Man, stoop—as you go through the World—and you'll miss many hard Thumps." Franklin's first pseudonym, Silence Dogood, mocked two of Mather's publications, "Silentarius" and "Bonifacius or Essays to Do Good," and in a return courtesy Mather dubbed the *Courant* writers "the Hell-Fire Club." Mather and Franklin alike had indefatigably curious minds and active pens, but where the clergyman wrote of "the powers of the air" Franklin tried to analyze evaporation, whirlwinds, barometric pressure, and electrical discharge. Two of his early letters to his own *Gazette*, "Men are Naturally Benevolent as Well as Selfish" and "Self-Denial Not the Essence of Virtue," deliberately overturn two basic Christian tenets—man's fall and intrinsic sinfulness, and the obligatory war upon the flesh and its appetites. He broke with Puritanism and orthodox theology, but kept considerable piety. His letters as he aged were full of cheerful and not entirely ironical talk of the next life, and his letter of condolence, in 1756, to Elizabeth Hubbart on the death of her stepfather, his brother John, emphatically embraces the supernatural: "It is the will of

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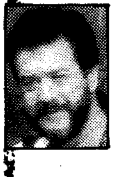

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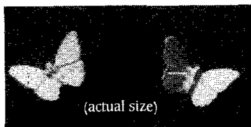

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God and Nature that these mortal bodies be laid aside . . . a man is not completely born until he be dead . . . We are spirits."

The Puritan became a respectable, though church-avoiding, bourgeois, and then went on to pose as an English gentleman, a French *savant*, and a philosopher-king with Promethean overtones. "*Eripuit caelo fulmen sceptrumque tyrannis*" ("He seized lightning from heaven and the sceptre from the tyrant") runs the grand Latin motto Anne-Robert Turgot coined for him, which Philip Freneau paraphrased in homely American verse in his "On the Death of Dr. Benjamin Franklin":

> But, matchless Franklin! what a few
> Can hope to rival such as you,
> Who seized from kings their sceptred pride,
> And turned the lightning's darts aside!

This apotheosized Franklin is the outermost shell; the innermost nugget can perhaps be found in the autobiographical passage where, discussing their English forebears, Franklin relayed to his son an anecdote he had heard from his uncle Benjamin: "This obscure Family of ours was early in the Reformation, and continu'd Protestants thro' the Reign of Queen Mary, when they were sometimes in Danger of Trouble on Account of their Zeal against Popery. They had got an English Bible, & to conceal & secure it, it was fastned open with Tapes under & within the Frame of a Joint Stool. When my Great Great Grandfather read in it to his Family, he turn'd up the Joint Stool upon his Knees, turning over the Leaves then under the Tapes. One of the Children stood at the Door to give Notice if he saw the Apparitor coming, who was an Officer of the Spiritual Court. In that Case the Stool was turn'd down again upon its feet, when the Bible remain'd conceal'd under it as before." A prudent piety yoked to an ingenious practicality—here, in this quintessential Protestant gadget, this stool with a Bible on its underside, we have Franklin in embryo, waiting to be born.

—JOHN UPDIKE

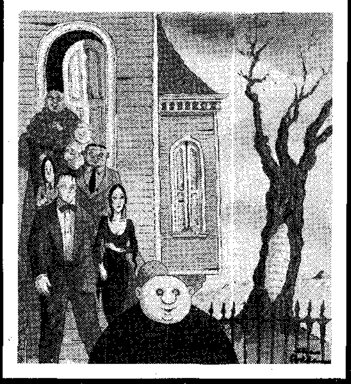
•

LETTERS WE NEVER FINISHED OPENING

[*From the envelope of a communication from World Press Review*]

"In Germany,
MEN CHANGE THEIR UNDERWEAR
on an average of
ONCE EVERY 7 DAYS"

THE ART OF
THE NEW YORKER
A 60 YEAR RETROSPECTIVE



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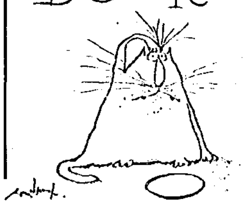

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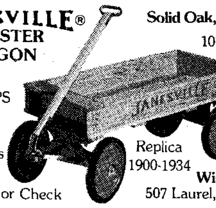

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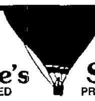

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BOOKS

BRIEFLY NOTED

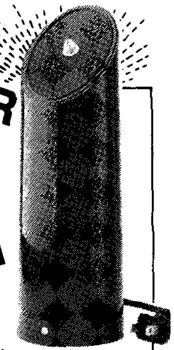
FICTION

GARISH DAYS, by Lynn Caraganis (Weidenfeld & Nicolson; $15.95). Coco Chanel and General Hugh (Ironpants) Johnson happily coexist in the mind of nineteen-year-old Louise Merrill, who in 1938 is sent by Lazarus's department store, of Columbus, Ohio, to shop the couture collections in Paris. Her foolish prewar gaiety is described by her, fifty years later, with unusual equanimity: a refusal to exploit the ironies of hindsight, a cool fidelity to the innocent beauty she used to be. The details of the period, like scent, recall a moment when the world changed. At Schiaparelli, "The models' heads looked like tiny, mean BBs! . . . Fabrics were printed with paintings of things like gears and shovels. By the end I felt I had aged one hundred years." This novel (the author's first) has a distinctive rhythm—the poise and recklessness of that time just before one discovers one knows nothing. As Louise sits reading the Paris *Herald* in a hotel dining room, she seems to join a "frieze of nude girls running around at eye level—painted on to look like Wedgwood. They ran in single file, each one reaching for what the girl in front of her had. But they all had the same thing, anyway—it was a bunch of ribbons."

LOVERS OF THE AFRICAN NIGHT, by William Duggan (Delacorte; $17.95). This middle volume of a projected trilogy ("The Great Thirst" appeared in 1985) is, aptly, about transition. The story, set in Kalahariland and South Africa, begins shortly after the Second World War and features several generations of women, all named Ata, who occupy a sort of bush ghetto known locally as No-Man's-Land. They seem destined to watch their daughters' fathers leave to marry other women; but then one Ata decides to be different. Meanwhile, white men launch a two-pronged assault, with drilling rigs and bulldozers, on the Kalahari's ancient and fragile ecology and on South Africa's black shantytowns. William Duggan, an agricultural consultant currently working in Senegal, is especially good at showing how memories are transformed into legends, often in the form of jingles sung by children.

CIVIL TO STRANGERS, AND OTHER WRITINGS, by Barbara Pym, edited by Hazel Holt (Dutton; $18.95). In a 1978 BBC radio talk, which caps this welcome collection of mostly unpublished and unpolished fiction, Barbara Pym (1913-1980) tips her hat to Stevie Smith and Ivy Compton-Burnett, but she traces her skewed and quizzical vision of Shropshire courtship rites to her career as an editor of an anthropology journal. The Second World War must also be credited for some of these pages' finest passages; for example, in "Goodbye Balkan Capital" (1941), a flight of fancy inspired by a shrouded flashlight, and a gas mask's "cool rubbery smell and tiny space of unbreathed air." In an untitled "Home Front" novel (1939-40), a young cad in a brand-new uniform pontificates about the future's inscrutability as he sips tea with a prospective mother-in-law. "Then live in the present and have another bun," she suggests. Hazel Holt's introductory comments are impeccable, and her editing seems judicious and discreet.

BROKEN GROUND, by John Keeble (Harper & Row; $17.95). A powerful, labyrinthine novel, set in an Oregon desert, about the building of a state-of-the-art prison by a multinational corporation. At the heart of the story is a cautious construction supervisor, named Lafleur, whose dying father's crooked business partner has strong-armed him into this job. At the heart of the construction is an underground hive; computerized blueprints reveal how its walls are to be honeycombed with electric monitors, but not who is to be monitored, or why. John Keeble's ear for all sorts of sounds, from pillow talk to an engine's throttle, is keen, and complements his story of how some men and women accommodate injustice and



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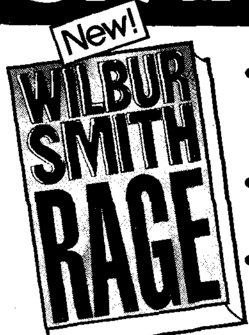

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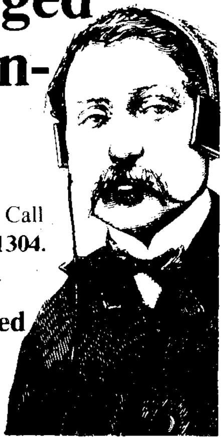

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wither, and a few rare ones fight it and bloom.

GENERAL

Bitter Melon: Stories from the Last Rural Chinese Town in America, by Jeff Gillenkirk and James Motlow (University of Washington; $35 cloth, $19.95 paper). A picture history and collective oral memoir of a century or so in the Sacramento Delta. The residents and former residents speaking here—seven in English, six through a skillful interpreter—landed in Locke, California, by chance, by choice, by birth, by marriage, by necessity. And in Locke, as one of them says, "it was very easy for a year to go by." For the majority, a year had a farm-labor rhythm—spinach to asparagus to cherries to pears. Most of the speakers sound glad to be asked about vanished things: the Bok Bok man, a drum-tapping night watchman who once patrolled Locke's three, safe streets; or the paddleboat that, for a day's pay (seventy-five cents), would take a farm worker down to San Francisco for Chinese opera. Mr. Motlow moved to Locke in 1971 and became the town handyman; he gradually received permission to take the elegant portraits that round out and update historical photographs and family snapshots here. The care he later took in choosing his co-author and his interpreter (Connie Chan, who grew up in Locke) also justifies the town's slowly awarded trust.

The Velvet Prison: Artists Under State Socialism, by Miklós Haraszti, translated from the Hungarian by Katalin and Stephen Landesmann with the help of Steve Wasserman; with a foreword by George Konrád (New Republic/Basic; $14.95). A brief, understated exposition of the new, "post-Stalinist," "soft," or "civilian" methods of controlling art and artists in Eastern Europe. Mr. Haraszti, a Hungarian dissident, tells us that his "gloomy book" was clandestinely published at home. Describing today's cultural commissars, he writes, "I may express my discontent, even my unhappiness, as long as I do so constructively." Of the two pre-Communist strands of artistic radicalism—one aesthetic and apolitical, the other activist and committed—only the latter has survived, but its activism has been purged, and its current mission is to support the state with work that "comforts" the élite. Mr. Haraszti's statement, sometimes bitterly funny, sometimes placidly exact, is a sort of photograph-in-words of a culture at a particular moment.

Myrna Loy: Being and Becoming, by James Kotsilibas-Davis and Myrna Loy (Knopf; $22.95). Myrna Loy (née Myrna Williams), now an active eighty-three, has been fortunate in most things in most of her life. She was wellborn in an old ranching family in Montana; she grew into unusual beauty; after years of playing exotic vamps, she stumbled into "The Thin Man" and became one of the great stars of the thirties and forties. Her latest good fortune is in having as her "collaborator" the excellent Mr. Kotsilibas-Davis. He allows Miss Loy to tell her story in what seems to be her natural speech; he knows what to emphasize (much of the story wonderfully re-creates the golden movie years between the wars); he covers her four failed marriages, and with reasonable discretion; and he makes sure that her moral courage in the House Un-American Activities Committee circus is recognized but also agreeably deprecated: the Red-baiters did her no harm, because, she recalls, "I happened to be rich and powerful . . . [They] needed scapegoats, but not at the risk of box-office returns." With many fine photographs.

Note: "Rachel and Her Children: Homeless Families in America," by Jonathan Kozol, has been published by Crown ($16.95). Some of the contents originally appeared in *The New Yorker*.

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[Ed Buxton in Ad Day]

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